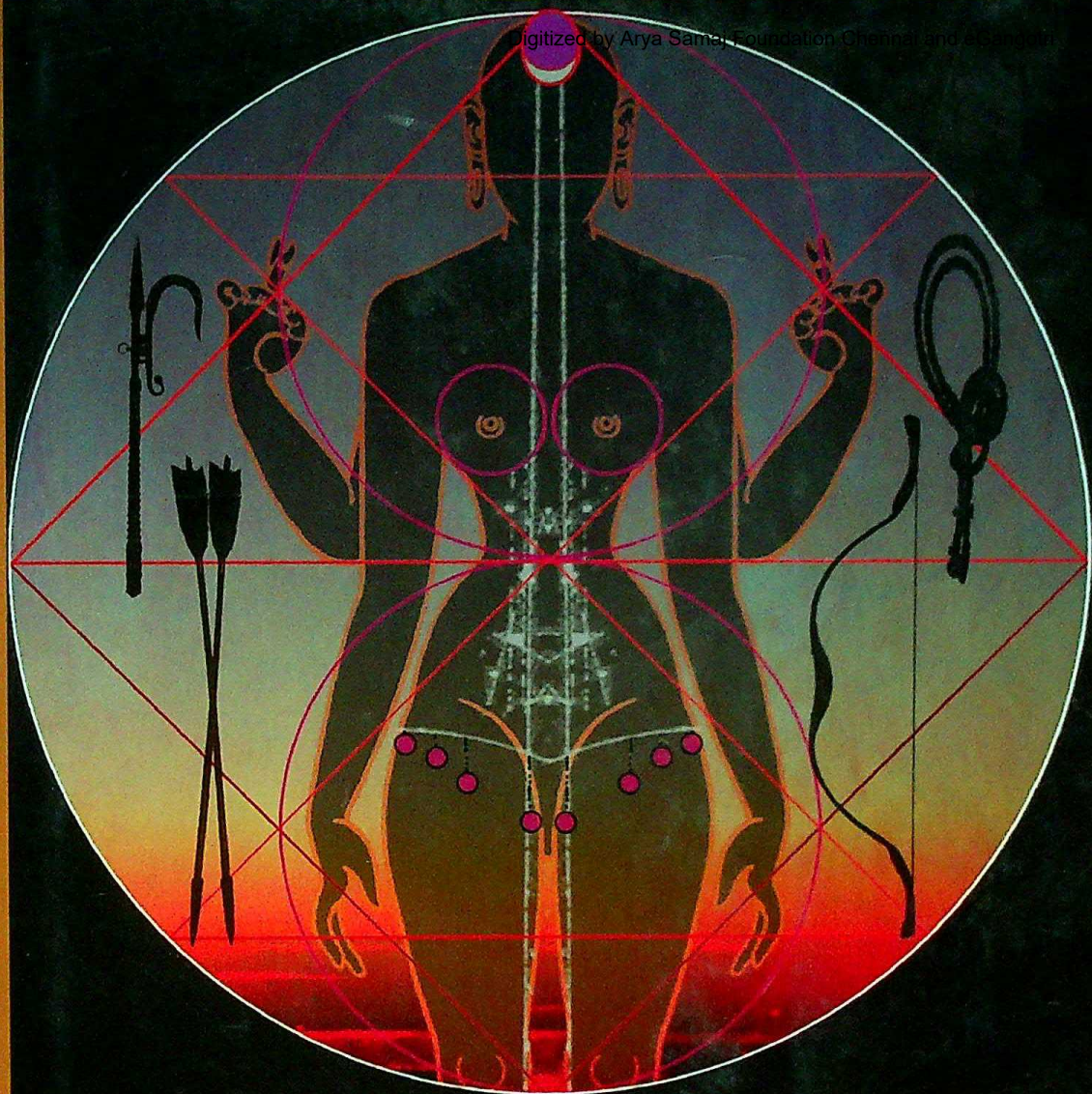




कणत्क
परिक्षी
धनुर्बाण
पुरस्ता

A TRANSLATION AND COMMENTARY ON THE ĀNANDALAHARĪ
by Nitya Chaitanya Yati

THE SAUNDARYALAHARĪ
of Śaṅkarācārya

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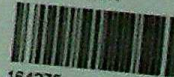
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on the Ānandalaharī

Nitya Chaitanya Yati



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*Dedicated to
Nataraja Guru
who inspired us
to seek beauty
in the Saundaryalaharī*

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*Fernhill Gurukula
Ooty, India*

Nitya Chaitanya Yati

Guide to Sanskrit Pronunciation

The sounds indicated in the examples are approximations of the original Sanskrit sounds. Only the consonants which are significantly different from English pronunciation have been included.

Vowels	Consonants
a like the u in "but"	ñ like the ng in "sing"
ā like the a in "far"	ñ like the n in Spanish "Senor"
i like the e in "me"	c like the ch in "eschew"
ī like the ee in "beet"	ch like the ch in "much"
u like the o in "to"	gh like the gh in "loghouse"
ū like the oo in "pool"	jh like the geh in "hedgehog"
ṛ like the ri in "rig"	th like the th in "Othello"
e like the a in "gate"	dh like the dh in "adhere"
ai like the i in "high"	ph like the ph in "haphazard"
o like the o in "note"	bh like the bh in "abhor"
au like the ou in "loud"	ś like the sh in "shove"
	ṣ like the sh in "fish"
	h echoes the vowel which immediately proceeds it

In the *Saundaryalahari*, all proper names that are in Sanskrit have been spelled with diacritics but have not been italicized. The exception is the names *Śiva* and *Śakti*, which are not simply names but also refer to absolute principles.

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Foreword

Within the historical panorama of Bhārata, or Greater India, numerous philosophical and religious traditions have flourished and over the centuries many of these strands have intermingled, creating a dense and rich cultural horizon. Emerging from this background is the *Saundaryalaharī*; a Sanskrit poem of 100 verses, it is a work both vital and enigmatic. The *Saundaryalaharī* is claimed as an essential text by the Tantric Śrīvidyā schools, a heterodox form of Hindu worship centered on the Devī, or goddess. At the same time, it is also considered to be one of the final works of the ninth-century philosopher Śaṅkarācārya, staunchest proponent of Advaita Vedānta (non-dual monism). The position that the *Saundaryalaharī* occupies between these two often contradictory traditions highlights essential characteristics of the history of Indian philosophy and of the poem itself.

From the prehistoric Indus Valley culture of Mohenjo-Daro through its conquest by the Aryans, the incursions of Central Asian nomads, Arab traders, and finally to Mogul conquest and European colonization, Indian cultural development has relied upon recurring revaluations of earlier thought in the light of challenging new interactions. Each era has remolded its philosophical inheritance to its own necessities. When Śaṅkara was wandering throughout India as a mendicant teacher and writing his vast, erudite commentaries on the Upaniṣads, the major factors on the cultural field were:

- a degenerate Hinduism that was both exaggerated and divided;
- the proliferation of heterodox practices under the umbrella of this degeneration;
- a strong challenge to Hinduism by an intellectually spare, reform-minded Buddhism;
- and the expansion of south Indian kingdoms and culture into South-East Asia, coupled with the cosmopolitan urbanity of the

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Malabar Coast (home to Śaṅkara) where Christian, Chinese, and Indian traditions converged along trade routes.

Upon this multivalent stage, Śaṅkara began his *bhāṣyas* (commentaries). In these and in his famous debates with Buddhist philosophers, Śaṅkara resurrected and reinvigorated the essential philosophical insights of the early Upaniṣadic *ṛṣis*. The Upaniṣads present an uncompromising vision of unified Beingness which is seamless, without division in time or space, and which sustains all the variegated individualities we relate to in our transactional lives. It is this world-view that Śaṅkara restated in a form unembellished by religious dogma.

Numerous Tantric schools flourished at this time and they practiced a spirituality which consciously contradicted all the strictures of a classist, authoritarian Brāhminism. Debate and rebuttal had been Śaṅkara's procedure with a distorted Hinduism and its rival Buddhism. With Tantra the revaluation was more subtle. A deep veneration for the primal energy of manifestation, *śakti*, often personified as the goddess or Devī, is the potent nucleus of Tantra that Śaṅkara extricated from its ritualistic encrustations. In his two final works, the *Saundaryalaharī* and the *Śivānandalaharī*, Śaṅkara used Tantra's intense and intimate identification with feminine nature to sculpt his poetic presentation of essential Upaniṣadic truth. In the *Saundaryalaharī*, he draws on the deepest of Indian traditions, its Draviḍian contemplative culture (often thought to be the prehistoric source of Tantric practice), to restate in a refined manner the same spare insights of his Advaita commentaries. By drawing in and sublimating the devotional and heterodox currents of his time, Śaṅkara enriches the strict purity of his philosophy.

The *Saundaryalaharī* is divided into two, sometimes three, distinct sections. The first forty-one verses are the *Ānandalaharī*, often separately published, as is done here, and considered the most important section of the book. The second section consists of verses 42 through 100; verses 92 through 100 are sometimes grouped as a third section. Together these sections comprise the *Saundaryalaharī*. *Laharī* translates as intoxication or "an overwhelming subjective or objective experience of an item of intelligence or of beauty upsurging in the mind of man" (Nataraja Guru). That factor of intoxication or flooding of consciousness is present throughout all sections of the book. In the first forty-one verses, *ānanda* is

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used in the sense of delight or bliss and refers to that experience of value which is subjectively appreciated. *Saundaryā* refers to beauty, to an aesthetic value appreciation which is objective. Taken together, *ānanda* (delight) and *saundaryā* (beauty) constitute an overwhelming, intoxicating experience which is both subjective and objective, inward and outward, one that permeates consciousness and allows a person to participate in the continuous pulsation of the neutral Absolute into a magnetic, compelling manifestation of Beauty.

In the last 1,200 years, there have been innumerable publications of the *Saundaryalaharī* in India, some with commentaries, some with accompanying paintings of the goddess, many with a variety of *mantras* or *yantras* for each of the verses. It has continued to be used as a devotional text, its verses chanted and meditated upon. However, until 1958 when the Harvard Oriental Series edition by Professor Norman Brown was published, there had been only two publications of the *Saundaryalaharī* in any European language. Brown's translation and comments are well grounded in an honest, thoughtful appreciation of the work. They falter, however, on his too cautious, academic literalism, and very little of the *Saundaryalaharī*'s poetic or mystical tenor is allowed to come forth.

In 1988 an English translation and commentary by Nataraja Guru was published by East-West University in India. Nataraja Guru brought to bear on his study of the *Saundaryalaharī* a philosophical vision steeped in the multiple cross-currents that were formed by the intersection of Indian tradition and the disciplines of modern Western science. The son of a prominent social reformer of south India, Nataraja Guru received his first degrees in zoology and geology. He went on to a D.Litt. in educational philosophy at the Sorbonne in Paris, later teaching at a Quaker school in Geneva, Switzerland. This varied background nurtured in him an ability to analyze beneath surface appearance to structural foundations and to look for interdisciplinary coherence.

Controversy has long surrounded the authorship of the *Saundaryalaharī* with many scholars feeling that it is wrongly attributed to Śaṅkara. Nataraja Guru, however, saw it as another expression, in different form and language, of Śaṅkara's non-dual vision. Śaṅkara's earlier *bhāṣyas* were written in what Nataraja Guru calls meta-language, which is a language about language, and which utilizes abstract signs. It is algebraic, highly

rational and conceptual, and is a language that discusses structure and assigns relationship. According to Nataraja Guru, the *Saundaryalaharī* was written in proto-language, that earliest and persisting substratum of communication that relies on image and visual reverberation rather than on intellectual discourse. Proto-language, geometric in orientation, is that archaic seedbed which is home to poetry, music, and the variety of symbolic art forms. In meta-language we are speaking rationally about a conceptual formation. In proto-language we experience an image in the immediate present and through many levels of perception. Nataraja Guru understood that Śāṅkara was using the prehistoric but potent symbols of Tantra and Devī worship to present Advaita Vedānta non-verbally. It is when words are used as allusive images that resonant in our universal consciousness and awaken in us sympathetic states of being and understanding that a written work can be non-verbal. In Nataraja Guru's study of the *Saundaryalaharī* he emphasized the nature of the different languages used by Śāṅkara and the position of proto-language in revealing the nature of Absolute Reality to man.

Nataraja Guru's student and successor is the present commentator on the *Āṇandalaharī*, Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati. Guru Nitya was raised in a traditional matriarchal compound in south India and comes from a family of scholars and poets. His studies in philosophy were conducted along two complementary tracks, as a university student in Kerala and Madras and as a mendicant throughout all of India. As a wandering student he lived with the Dutch scholar of comparative religions, Dr. Mees, the mystic Ramaṇa Maḥarṣi, and at the camp of Mahatma Gandhi. Supplementing Guru Nitya's work in philosophy were graduate studies in psychology at the University of Bombay. After his period of studies, Guru Nitya spent eighteen months in solitary retreat, delving deeply into his own physical and spiritual nature. The rigors of this isolation lay a foundation of contemplative discipline and mystic intuition that add a significant dimension to his work on the *Saundaryalaharī*.

To this commentary, Guru Nitya brings a strong background in the schools of Indian philosophy, a comprehensive psychological knowledge, and an acute insight into the nature of aesthetics. The *Saundaryalaharī*'s often arcane symbols are clarified by his understanding of the book's inner structure and its mythological references. Verse 17 is an appropriate

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example. At first reading it seems to be merely an intricate listing, somewhat devotional, of various goddesses. Guru Nitya, however, illuminates the basic psychological states that the goddesses are indicating and the characteristics and relationships of speech that they represent.

It is significant that Śaṅkara wrote the *Saundaryalaharī* as a poem to be sung in praise of the divine Śakti. When chanted, words move beyond their solely rational import and they become carriers of Beauty. In this way, language passes beyond syntax. *Nāda* (sound) is, in fact, one of the central concepts of the *Saundaryalaharī*. As *avyakta* (the unmanifest) unfolds outward and becomes modulated, its first tremor is that of sound. The reality of the One is made tangible to us as sound, and sound is the basis of manifested consciousness. The meaning of the neutral Absolute bursts as a value into our awareness, a process called *sphoṭa* in Sanskrit. As such, sound has a transforming effect and in the *Saundaryalaharī* many verses concentrate on its nature and function.

Each verse, as well, has its own particular *mantra* (sound syllable) which when concentrated upon in a proper state of attention helps to align the meditator's consciousness, to direct it to an awareness of unlimited Being. Guru Nitya has stripped away the popular misconceptions surrounding these sound units and presents them as intended, as aural tools for focusing one's consciousness. In the great proliferation of śakti, the *līlā* of creation, we first hear; then we see the world's shimmering beauty. What was vast, indiscernible and beyond comprehension — the mystery of all beginnings — now becomes sound and sight interweaving into innumerable configurations. Along with each *mantra*, there are corresponding *yantras* (geometric forms) whose visual patterns also work to discipline the individual's consciousness. Guru Nitya clarifies the relationships between *mantra*, *yantra* and their activating dynamics, Tantra, and highlights their essential nature as methods of transformation.

Implicit in a discussion of Tantra is an understanding of yoga, which is the dialectical pairing of polarities in such a manner that they can, through practice and concentration, be united into a meaningful whole. In the *Saundaryalaharī*, there are two essential and recurring polarities: Śiva and Śakti, the masculine ground of being from which feminine becoming arises and to which she gives power and meaning; the goddess

and the devotee, where the goddess is that great universal circumference which the devotee relates to as an individual point and into which he eventually merges.

The splendid and alluring *Śakti* emerges from the mute, ash-covered *Śiva*. As the dancing goddess, *Śakti* rains down art, music, mystical vision and, in fact, the essence of our very life upon us. This poetic allegory is descriptive of both cosmic functions and psychological processes. In the imagery of the goddess which Śāṅkara employs, her body is used in the manner of traditional Indian aesthetics: as a canvas upon which to paint spiritual insights. It is through the palpability of her body that the devotee begins to apprehend what is non-manifested. And it is through her beauty — its sound, sight, touch, and smell — that the source of all creation is seen and eventually merged with.

As Guru Nitya writes in *Love and Devotion*:

The archetypal mother image in the *Saundaryalaharī* is used as an edifice on which to sculpt the intricacies of man-woman dialectics, the virtues and paradoxes of the female psyche, and the semantic possibilities and even impossibilities that highlight shades of bliss ranging from simple sensuality to the all-consuming conflagration of Beauty that is interchangeable with terms like Love, Total Awareness, Wonder and Absolute Transcendence.

The particular iconographies of the goddess in the *Saundaryalaharī* are intended to be used as supports for meditation, as a way to approach the one unmanifested Reality. When the devotee finally realizes that he is That, that the cosmic and psychological aspects are but conjoined counterparts, the iconographic tools disappear, as does the individual. This understanding of Tantric practice has often been a stumbling block when students become enamored of the images that are there only as a pathway.

Erotics is an inescapable topic in a work related to Tantra, and Tantra has often been perceived as a yoga of sex, where sexual intercourse is the ultimate method for realizing reality and power. This is too narrow an understanding of the erotics which suffuse the *Saundaryalaharī*. In the *Saundaryalaharī* the erotic pull is that of the god Eros. It is an erotic mysticism, spoken of by both Plotinus and St. Augustine in the Western tradition, and which is the attraction of the individual toward God or the

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Good. The act of sex is the final, extroverted manifestation of eros in the physical realm, one way of actualizing the erotic sensation but not its source. In both the Christian Catholic Church and in Hindu Vaiṣṇavism, the individual aspirant, whether male or female, is likened to the lover of God, either as the bride of Christ or as Rādhā to Kṛṣṇa's cowherd. Sensual imagery and male-female attractions are forms used to describe the relationship between the individual person and the all-encompassing divine reality. Similar literary and philosophical methods can be seen in St. John of the Cross' *Dark Night of the Soul* and Jayadeva's *Gīta Govindam*. This relationship can be put in a more secular language: conscient and articulating spirit is in constant dialectical interplay with taming and transforming matter, as is beautifully elaborated by Sri Aurobindo in his poem *Savitri*. This is not to say there is no sex in erotics, but we need to rephrase our language and understanding: sex is not the ultimate union but is rather the functional dynamics of the word of God.

In India at the end of the dry season, the whole landscape is parched. The cracked earth and the shriveled plants long for water. Slowly in the darkening east the monsoon clouds gather. As they coalesce, a charge fills the air and everything is electrified. At the moment of nearly insupportable suspense, the rains break free and wash over the world. This intense polarization, waiting and yearning, culmination, release, and fulfillment are the erotic passions that pulse through the *Saundaryalahari*. It is the song of desire and union between the Devī and her silent husband, Śiva, and one that finds resonance within our own hearts as the waves of beauty billow up from their dance.

Portland, Oregon, 1994

Deborah Buchanan

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Lotus Feet of the Goddess symbol, line drawings and *yantras* by Andrew Larkin.

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Introduction

According to the traditional psychology of Vedānta, the Absolute is conceived both as the transcendental *parā* and the immanent *aparā*. In a slightly modified sense, Tantra calls these *Śiva* and *Śakti*, respectively. There are mythological stories describing *Śiva* as the destroyer of the three cities, Tripurāntaka, a city (*pura*) being a multi-structured matrix of human interest. These three cities of man's interests are the worlds of the cosmos, of ethos or social culture, and of the psyche.

Man is interested in the cosmic phenomena to which his place of habitation, the green earth, belongs. In the city of the cosmos he has the starry heavens that conceal within themselves system upon system, from the nebular to the biological. Within the system of his own solar orbit, man relates the events of his life to the rotations of the planets, the waxing and waning of the moon, the equinoxes of the sun, the change of the seasons, the storms and fury of the sea, and the cyclones and earthquakes which expose him to the caprice of fateful chance. Man's city of the cosmos ranges from the glistening dew drops on the rose in his garden to the infinite that stretches far beyond the farthest star which has not yet kissed the earth with its beams of light. This city is full of awe, enormous and sublime. By its quantitative or qualitative might, this cosmos shocks man and fills him with pain at his own smallness, then fills him with a feeling of exaltation at the greatness of his own moral nature, which is "loftier than all the splendors of the outer world" (Immanuel Kant).

The second city of man is the "moral world below" which is festooned with smiles and tears. It is here man lives with his fellow men and women in love and hatred, where he marries and begets children, and husbands land and rears cattle. It is here that he trades with all that can be purchased and sold, including war and peace, and morality and justice. Sociology and commerce, economics and politics are the pastimes of this city. Here man erects schools and legislative houses, jails and concentration camps, temples of god, and art emporiums. He revels here in his operas and theaters. From this city man shoots his missiles to the distant planets. He performs impossible feats in medicine and surgery to save rare human life, and then with the same ease of conscience plugs in the wires of electric chairs to wipe out those whom he fears. Man lives in this second city



Surface of the Sun. Andrew Larkin. Acrylic painting on monoprint. America. 1990.

The sun, as an integral part of the cosmic phenomena, represents one of the three cities (tripuras) that are sustained and nourished by Śakti. Rising up from the surface of the sun, the solar flare resembles the spark of individual consciousness that becomes "an all-devouring conflagration which ultimately burns away time and space and all the phenomenal names and forms that give content and structure to the three cities."

called *saṁsāra* weaving tales of fret and fume signifying nothing and seeing visions of beauty, truth, and goodness.

Man's third city lies in the crevice of his brain and in the cave of his heart. It is the realm of his psyche. The face of this city is man's surface consciousness that changes its hues from the pink rose of morning's glory to the terrifying dark of dreadful nights. It is in this world that man becomes erotic or sarcastic, compassionate or destructive, heroic or frightful. Mysteries and marvels of the unknown fill this city with wonder or fear that ever remain a secret to man. It is in this innermost city that man listens to the call of the Absolute and longs for liberation. It is just here that he receives the all-consuming light of the third eye of *Śiva*, the burner of the three cities, the Tripurāntaka.

Śiva sets ablaze the spark of individual consciousness into an all-devouring conflagration, which ultimately burns away Time and Space and all the phenomenal names and forms that give content and structure to the three cities of the cosmos (*brahmāṇḍa*), politikos (*saṁsāra*), and psychos (*ahamkāra*). The counterpart of Tripurāntaka is Tripurasundarī, the beauty that bathes the above-said three cities of man with her eternal glory and veiling *māyā*. In all the three cities, the city of the heavenly galaxy and nature, the city of interpersonal relationships, and the city of the libido and subliminal psychic underworld, man stands spellbound by the beauty of Tripurasundarī. He is enlightened by the truth of her wisdom. He is inspired by her never-failing law, her ingenious sense of structure, and her unsurpassed goodness. In the eastern skies of the unchanging *Śiva*, Tripurasundarī paints in gold and purple the dawn of creation. In his midday skies she sets the clock of action, *karma cakra*, which keeps the wheel of *saṁsāra* whirling into cyclic rhythms. In his evening skies she paints the dissolution of all that vanishes behind the crimson veil of the dying sun.

Verse One

शिवः शक्त्या युक्तो यदि भवति शक्तः प्रभवितुं
न चेदेवं देवो न खलु कुशलः स्पन्दितुमपि।
अतस्त्वामाराध्यां हरिहरविरिञ्चादिभिरपि
प्रणन्तुं स्तोतुं वा कथमकृतपुण्यः प्रभवति॥

*śivaḥ śaktyā yukto yadi bhavati śaktaḥ prabhavitum
na ced evaṁ devo na khalu kuśalaḥ spanditum api ।
atastvām ārādhyām hari hara virañcādibhirapi
praṇantum stotum vā katham akṛta puṇyaḥ prabhavati ॥*

If Śiva should only when united with Śakti
get the power to manifest in becoming;
If, again, without such, he has no ability even to pulsate;
How then could one of unaccomplished merits
have the privilege of bowing to or even praising
One such as you, adored by Hari, Hara, Viriñci and others?



The Indian trinity is an allegorical personification of creation, preservation, and dissolution. These functions are also understood as the projection of manifestation, empirical existence, and final merger, and are called, respectively, in Indian mythology Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara. In the present verse, Brahmā is named as Viriñci, Viṣṇu as Hari, and Maheśvara as Hara. As these triple aspects are within cyclic periods, the three gods have a time span and are not to be confused with the Absolute, or Śiva.

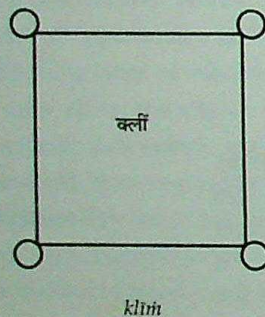
Each verse in the *Saundaryalaharī* has a corresponding *mantra* and a corresponding *yantra*. The *mantra* is the nominal, verbal, acoustic aspect of *nāda* (the primordial sound) considered to be the original cause of the universe. The *yantra* is the formal, visual symbol that delimits the potential of the *mantra* to manifest in a chosen field. There is, in addition, a special device that relates the *mantra* to the *yantra* so as to derive the psychodynamics implied in both. *Mantra* is considered the algebraic aspect

4 | THE SAUNDARYALAHARĪ OF ŚĀṆKARĀCĀRYA

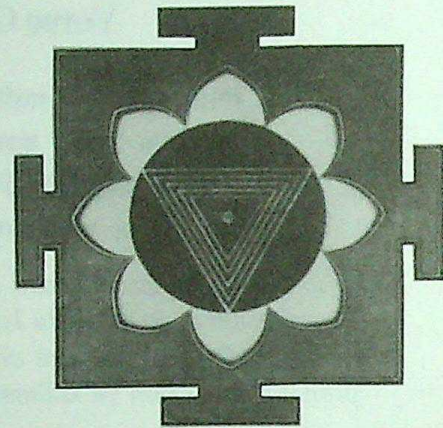
and *yantra* the geometric one, while *tantra* is the activating dynamics that conjoins *mantra* and *yantra* to make a functional whole.

Each original Sanskrit verse has both an exoteric and an esoteric meaning. The exoteric meaning is the translation. The esoteric meaning is that which indicates the *mantras* that are implied in the verse. Each *yantra* has its own psycho-dynamics which operate in a subtle way when the aspirant looks steadily at the form. As the conceptual ground of the universe is established on the audiovisual experience of the subject, all forms have their own potential to influence one's state of consciousness. The particular psychodynamics of the *yantra* are called *yantracaitanya* and the psychodynamics of the *mantra* are *mantracaitanya*. *Caitanya* (pure consciousness) is the common homogeneous factor implied in the universal Self and in the individual self, as well as in visual and auditory aspects. The original expounder of a *mantra*, along with its corresponding *yantra*, is called its *ṛṣi* (seer).

The *yantra* for this first verse is as shown:



The seed *mantra* (*bija-mantra*) is *klīm*. That is to be meditated upon as the conjunction of Śiva and Śakti. The *ṛṣi* of the *mantra* that is recommended for meditative propitiation is Govinda, and the presiding deity to be duly worshiped and invoked for grace is Mahātripurasundarī. The meter for recitation is the octave, *anuṣṭup*, and the psychodynamics to be experienced are that of being surrounded by an ocean of nectar. The spiritual growth to be experienced is the perception of Śiva and Śakti as aspects of truth that are visualized, as aspects of goodness that are perceived, and as aspects of an ecstatic appreciation of beauty in which everything stands bathed.



Kālī Yantra. Gouache on paper. Rajasthan, India, eighteenth century.

Located within the fourfold structure of consciousness is the lotus with open petals. It surrounds the five downward-pointing triangles symbolic of the female yoni. At the very center is the bindu, or locus of universal consciousness.



Head of Elephanṭa. Mahēśvara, on south wall of Śiva cave. Elephanṭa, India. Possibly Kālacuri period, c. mid-sixth century.

These three stone heads depict the triple aspects of Śiva. On the left is the fearful manifestation of destruction, balanced by the right-hand carving of creation which is serene and feminine. Subsuming both is Mahādeva, the great god, who contains all moods and powers within himself.

VERSE ONE | 5

In the *Saundarayalaharī* the conjunction of *Śiva* and *Śakti* is understood as a structure of twenty-five categories listed below:

THE FIVE ELEMENTS

Earth	Water	Fire	Air	Ether
<i>pṛthvī</i>	<i>ap</i>	<i>agni</i>	<i>vāyu</i>	<i>ākāśa</i>

THE FIVE SENSES

Smell	Taste	Sight	Touch	Sound
<i>gandham</i>	<i>rasam</i>	<i>rūpam</i>	<i>sparsam</i>	<i>śabdham</i>

THE FIVE ORGANS OF SENSE

Nose	Tongue	Eye	Skin	Ear
<i>ghrāṇam</i>	<i>jihvā</i>	<i>cakṣu</i>	<i>tvak</i>	<i>śrotram</i>

THE FIVE AGENTS OF ACTION

Genitals	Excretory	Legs	Hands	Speech
<i>upastham</i>	<i>pāyu</i>	<i>pādam</i>	<i>pāṇi</i>	<i>vāk</i>

THE FIVE FORMS OF ŚIVA

Mind	Illusion	Knowledge	Absolute Lord	Pure Absolute
<i>manas</i>	<i>māyā</i>	<i>śuddhavidyā</i>	<i>maheśvara</i>	<i>sadāśiva</i>

Verse Two

तनीयांसं पांसुं तव चरणपङ्केरुहभवं
विरिञ्चिः संचिन्वन् विरचयति लोकानविकलम्।
वहत्येनं शौरिः कथमपि सहस्रेण शिरसां
हरः संक्षुद्यैनं भजति भसितोद्भूलनविधिम्॥

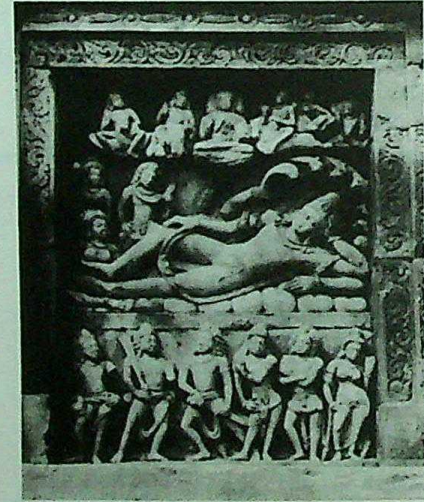
*tanīyāṁsaṁ pāṁsuṁ tava caraṇa paṅkeruha bhavaṁ
viriñciḥ sañcinvan viracayati lokān avikalam ।
vahaty enaṁ śauriḥ katham api sahasreṇa śirasāṁ
haraḥ saṁkṣudyainam bhajati bhasitoddhūlanavidhim ॥*

Brahmā the creator collects the fine dust
of the lotus of your feet,
and out of that creates all these worlds.
Viṣṇu with the thousand heads (of Ananta) somehow
preserves all those individual things from chaotic mixing;
and Hara (Śiva), powdering the dust even more finely,
adorns it on himself freely as he meditates.



In Indian religious rituals and forms of devotional homage, the initial step is to offer worship to the feet of the deity. Similarly, when a disciple meets his guru, he prostrates at the guru's feet, as the feet symbolize the spiritual path. A guru walks in the path of the Absolute (Brahman) and since walking in Sanskrit is called *carya*, walking in the path of the Absolute is termed *brahmacarya*. A guru is a *brahmacārī*. By prostrating or showing devotion to the feet, one esoterically accepts the path of the guru. In the present case, the feet of the Universal Mother are worshiped as the source of the creation, preservation, and dissolution of the universe. These triple functions of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Maheśvara are symbolized in the particular *yantra* that is recommended for meditation with this verse. It is given as a triangle with the base inverted. Its ascending left side is Brahmā, the base is Viṣṇu, and the ascending right side is Rudra.

The seed *mantra* is given as *hrīm*. The main intention of the Tantric meditation using this *yantra* is to sublimate the demands of one's lower



Viṣṇu Sleeps on the Cosmic Serpent, Ananta. Daśavatāra Temple, Deogarh, India, sixth century.

Viṣṇu is the god who sustains all of creation in its actuality and specificity. Here, as Viṣṇu Viśvarūpa (having all forms), he reclines on Ananta, the serpent of endless time, while floating on the primeval waters.

VERSE TWO | 7

nature. All the phenomena of the entire universe are here meditated upon as the fine dust particles on the feet of the Universal Mother. The feet are pictured in the form of a lotus, and the dust is referred to as the pollen dust of the lotus feet. Pollen is a symbol of fertility or generation, and its abundance symbolizes fecundity. The worlds of the universe being infinite, they are referred to as the countless dust particles of the feet. This meditation implies the movement of the mind from the infinite cosmos to the most minutely conceivable point. By applying the processes of reduction and enlargement, the specific properties cited in the phenomenal world are revealed to be appearance rather than reality.

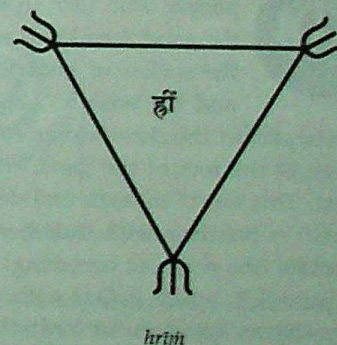
Even though the cause can be infinitesimally small, the effect assumes an empirical status in time and space. There it deserves the validity of the actual. Hence, all actions are directed towards rendering objects their actual existence and giving attention to the preservation of that status. It is emphasized here that Viṣṇu is preserving these worlds by supporting them, somehow, on his thousand heads with great difficulty. Phenomenal specificity is not the true nature of the Absolute and, therefore, it is unnatural for phenomena to remain changeless. Change is not only inevitable but it also culminates absolute reduction into a mode of total negation. That is why it is stated here that the universes are gathered and reduced to a state of dust still finer than the original caused by Rudra, the god of dissolution, to decorate his forehead. The pollen of frequent generation taken from the feet of the Universal Mother finally changes into the irreversible state of the changeless on the forehead of Śiva or the Absolute.

By this meditation the twenty-five categories enumerated in the commentary on the first verse are properly reviewed and reassessed. By such a discipline, all sensual, vital, mental, and psychic distractions can be removed. To ensure the success of this meditation the middle *mantra* of the preliminary invocation of the Universal Mother is used. By preliminary invocation we mean here the *bālā* aspect, *bālā* translating as small female child. The Universal Mother is first invoked as a small child using a special *mantra*, *aiṁ hrīṁ saum*. After having properly received the *mantra* from the guru, one should use the *yantra* with *hrīṁ* as the seed *mantra*. This should be practiced until it becomes easy for the aspirant to efface the individual ego and to reduce everything to a state of consciousness which has no dimension of time or space. Simultaneously the aspirant's awareness of his identity with the pure consciousness of the universal Self that pervades everything increases and deepens.



The footprints of Nārāyaṇa. Gouache on paper, Nepal, twentieth century.

The footprints of the gods and goddesses are microcosmic representations of that particular deity's attributes. They delineate in visual form the divine qualities that the deity possesses. In Indian mythology it is said that the goddess' footprints leave a pervasive fragrance on the earth, arousing both devotion and discrimination in her devotees.



Verse Three

अविद्यानामन्तस्तिमिरमिहिरद्वीपनगरी
जडानां चैतन्यस्तबकमकरन्दसुतिझरी।
दरिद्राणां चिन्तामणिगुणनिका जन्मजलधौ
निमग्नानां दंष्ट्रा मुररिपुवराहस्य भवती॥

*avidyānām antastimira mihiradvīpanagarī
jaḍānām caitanya stabaka makarandasrutijharī ।
daridrāṇāṁ cintāmaṇi guṇanikā janmajaladhau
nimagnānām daṇṣṭrā muraripuvarāhasya bhavatī ॥*

O Mother, the dust of your feet appears to the ignorant as a luminous island in the ocean of darkness and dispels their ignorance. The same is experienced by people of inertia as a flow of the nectar of the divine flower of consciousness. To poor people the dust of your feet is a collection of wish-fulfilling gems. Those who lie immersed in the ocean of *saṁsāra* (or becoming) see the same as the tusk of the divine boar that once raised the world from the abyss of destruction as the incarnation of Mahāviṣṇu.



In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* (VII.16) Kṛṣṇa speaks of four types of people who turn to him with devotion: "Among doers of the good, four kinds are intent on me, Arjuna: the distressed, the seeker of knowledge, the seeker of the goods of life, and the wise, O Leader of the Bharatas." We find in the *Saundaryalaharī* the classification of another four-item group, here seeking refuge at the feet of the Devī, which is very similar to that given by Kṛṣṇa. This world of birth and death and proliferating chains of action (*karma*) is bristling with dualities of all sorts and is called *saṁsāra* or *bhavābhi* (the ocean of becoming). This phenomenal superimposition on the pure Self, which is One without a second, is attributed to ignorance or nescience (*avidyā*). In Vedānta, specific possibility of error in the individual mind is called *avidyā* and generic distortion of the universal

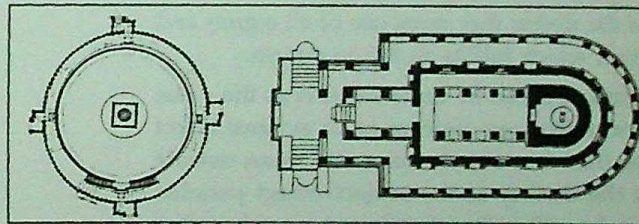
mind or the mind of God (*īśvara*) is called *māyā*. As the primal cause of suffering is personal ignorance, the first reference is made to ignorant people, *avidyānām*. The individual self is usually compared to the waves that form on the surface of the sea, having no substantial existence apart from the water of the sea. Hence, the inner and outer environment of the individual self is here compared to a sea of darkness. The grace of the Mother is visualized as a rising sun on an island of light. In Sanskrit, the dispeller of darkness is called guru, and here the goddess herself is looked upon as the true guru who resides in the very heart of the seeker. The *mantra* is the sound body of the deity who reveals the true Self to the seeker; that is why the deity herself is looked upon as the guru.

The second reference is to people of dull intellect. The Sanskrit word is *jaḍa*, which is the opposite of *caitanya*. Whereas *caitanya* is formless and can assume any modulation, what is most characteristic of *jaḍa* is its morbidity. Assuming a modality is *ṛtti*. In modern psychological terms it is the same as a conditioned state. If a man's mind is already cluttered with the morbid conditionings of his childhood impressions and narrow social conventions, *jaḍa*, the mind becomes so closed as to have no spiritual vision of the Absolute. In such cases, a breakthrough is necessary. The evolution of life is a continuous process of organizing matter to a more and more complex expression of values, which can be easily described as good and beautiful and, in that sense, identical with the spirit. Devotees who crave for a breakthrough to such realization and understanding become more and more conscious of the fetters of life. Such a person



Viṣṇu in his incarnation as a boar, Varāha, rescuing the goddess Pṛthvī, or earth. Durga Temple, Aihole, India, c. late seventh century to early eighth century.

Viṣṇu, the god of sustenance, incarnated ten different times, each time as the savior of humankind during a crisis. Complex imagery here portrays the principle of enlightenment as Viṣṇu who rescues what is precious in life from the chaos of violence and ignorance.



Left: Floor plan of Stūpa I or the Great Stūpa. Sāñct, Madhya Pradesh, India, c. third century BCE through the first century CE.

Right: Floor plan of Pārvaṭī Temple, 1884. Madhya Pradesh, India, c. early sixth century.

In India both Hindu temples and Buddhist stūpas have been built with their architectural framework based upon the geometric designs that are also found in Tantric yantras, such as those used in the *Saundaryalaharī*. The temple or stūpa was an architectural representation of the structure of the cosmos. Their design also expresses the complex insights of traditional psychology, such as the various walls relating to the five elements and their corresponding human emotions.

bemoans his incapacity and helplessness to see truth and wants the divine to bestow upon him the grace that can stimulate and inspire his intelligence. The well-known *gāyatrī mantra* of the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* is a prayer to this effect, asking the light of the divine to remove the darkness of the mind and to stimulate the intellect. Narayana Guru describes such a breakthrough in his *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam* (verse 35):

*Like ten thousand suns coming all at once,
the modulation of discrimination arises;
the veil of transience, covering knowledge, is māyā;
tearing this away, the primal sun alone shines.*

This same grace is referred to as the flow of honey of the divine flower of consciousness, *caitanya śabaka makaranda-srutijharī*.

The poor people mentioned here are the same as the seeker of the goods of life, *arthārthī*, of the *Bhagavad-Gītā*. Though in a mundane sense this can mean ordinary seekers of wealth, spiritually it has a more significant reference. Even the man who indulges in opulence and the luxury of an affluent life can suddenly feel wretched and worthless when the idea occurs to him that the things in which he indulges have no spiritual worth. The turning away of a person like Mary Magdalene from the pleasures and riches of life to Jesus Christ is an example of the awareness of spiritual poverty. The fulfillment of such a turnabout search is attributed in this verse to the grace coming from *cintāmaṇi*. *Cintā* in Sanskrit refers to the mind that worries regretfully over the past and is desirefully anxious of the future. *Maṇi* is a precious jewel. In the present case it should be understood as the grace of the divine that cures one of all regrets and remorse of the past and as that which fulfills all future desires.

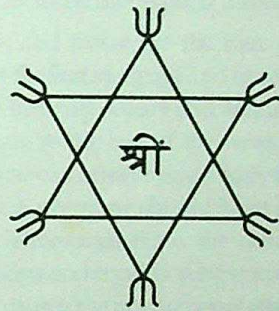
Another sense in which *cintāmaṇi* can be understood is as the value core of one's own self. A person becomes desirous of an external object only when he sees the value that that object represents as an outside factor. When he overcomes the duality of the subject-object paradox through proper contemplation, he will realize that there is no value other than his own Self. In other words, he finds his *cintāmaṇi* within himself.

The ultimate goal of life according to Indian scriptures is the realization of the Self and deliverance from all sense of bondage and all forms of conditionings. The state of the consciousness that is bound is stated here

VERSE THREE | 11

as, "those who live immersed in the ocean of *samsāra* or becoming". In all religions God is called the savior. The divine is as much interested in the salvation of the individual as is the seeker himself. The grace is therefore described here as an actual saving factor which comes from beneath the feet of the seeker. The grace from above should be understood in contrast to the grace from beneath. Here the reference is to the actual events of everyday life that turn the footsteps of the seeker to the path which will ultimately lead him or her to salvation. That is why it is likened to the tusk of Viṣṇu incarnated as a boar.

The *yantra* given here for meditation is a simplified form of the *Śrīcakra* in which isosceles triangles interpose. The *bīja-mantra* is *śrīṁ*.



śrīṁ

Verse Four

त्वदन्यः पाणिभ्यामभयवरसदो दैवतगण-

स्त्वमेका नैवासि प्रकटितवराभीत्यभिनया।

भयात् त्रातुं दातुं फलमपि च वाञ्छासमधिकम्

शरण्ये लोकानां तव हि चरणावेव निपुणौ॥

tvadanyaḥ pāṇibhyāṃ abhaya varado daivata-gaṇas-

tvam ekā naivāsi prakṛṭita varābhītyabhinayā ।

bhayāt-trātum dātum phalam api ca vāñchāsamadhikam

śaraṇye lokānāṃ tava hi caraṇāveva nipuṇau ॥

O Mother, thou art the refuge of all the worlds.

When other gods give their blessings to devotees
with gestures symbolizing boons as well as refuge,
You do not show any such gestures.

Your mere feet are more than sufficient to bestow
upon your devotees all their needs,
which are more than what they themselves are aware of.



In their iconographic representations, Viṣṇu, Śiva, and most of the other gods are shown with a raised right hand symbolizing blessings and an open left hand symbolizing refuge. It is not usual to show the Devī with these gestures, as the Devī is not to be understood as a kind of tutelary deity to whom the worshiper goes in times of need to ask for favors. She is the generator of life, its preserver, and the transformer of life who brings each individual self to his highest perfection, and her feet are to be understood as an ontological negative factor. She is like the hidden roots of a tree which continuously supply nourishing sap to the branches and leaves, though their presence is never felt.

In the traditional accounts of the Devī, the four symbols shown in her hands are the *pāśa* (a rope), *aṅkuśa* (a hook), *ikṣukodaṇḍa* (bow and arrow), and *puṣpabhāṇa* (arrows of flowers which are usually five in number). The five flowers are *kalahūra* (earth symbol), *kamala* (water symbol), *raktakairava*

VERSE FOUR | 13

(fire symbol), *indīvara* (air symbol), and *sahakāra* (sky symbol). Devī by herself does not shoot them, but by her consent and will the god of love shoots these flower arrows to stimulate love in the heart of the devotee. An arrow is always aimed at a mark or target which symbolizes singleness of purpose, concentration, and the withdrawal of interest from all else. In the present case, instead of one arrow five arrows have to mark the same target.

A man's life is all in chaos and conflict when his physical body is not tuned with its vital urges, when his vital urges don't have the sanction of his rational connection, when his intuitions point in a different direction than his logic, and when he has psychic apprehensions which do not tally with his spiritual values. In the grace that is promised here, the devotee obtains the harmony of all these five aspects through love or pure devotion.

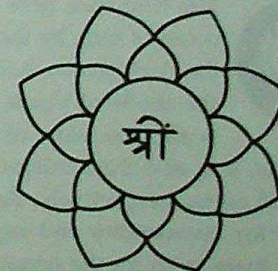
Dharma, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa* are the four goals of life. *Dharma* is a discipline one receives at the feet of a guru and from which one obtains a clear notion of his or her own intrinsic nature and an idea of the righteous way in which he or she can relate to the rest of the world. *Artha* is the means and instruments by which one can ensure one's happiness. *Kāma* is the natural and rightful desires which everyone should have as a dynamic to make life meaningful. *Mokṣa* is deliverance from the chains of *karma* and a total effacement of all colorations and conditionings caused by the impressions of the past, *vāsanā*. As Devī causes the phenomenal world as well as release from it, she favors her devotee with all these four goals. She provides him with a healthy body and mind by which he can participate in the abundant possibilities of life that are created for him. In the light of his own sense of righteousness and the opportunities given to him by grace, she fills his mind with the right kind of desires and ultimately, through proper unfoldment, she gives him the final release or emancipation.

The *yantra* is in the form of a fully opened lotus with eight inner petals and eight outer petals. The *mantra* given for meditation is *śrīṃ*, the same as the previous verse. According to the Upaniṣads, the Self is called *svarājya*, meaning one's native country. When one is fully established in his *svarājya* his status is of the *saṃrāt* (emperor). With the help of this meditation, the devotee establishes himself or herself in all the four realms of *dharma*, *artha*, *kāma*, and *mokṣa* and identifies his oneness with the manifested as well as the unmanifested Absolute.



Śiva and Śakti. Bronze statue, Coḷa style, twentieth century.

Śiva and Śakti represent the two inseparable aspects of existence, variously defined as male/female, active/passive, form/formless. In Indian iconography these two facets of the one numinous absolute reality are given artistic form as the husband and wife pair Śiva and Śakti. Each of the deities' four hands is either in a *mudrā*, cosmic hand posture, which expresses an aspect of the god or goddess, or the hand holds an object which describes an attribute of that deity.



śrīṃ

Verse Five

हरिस्त्वामाराध्य प्रणतजनसौभाग्यजननीम्
पुरा नारी भूत्वा पुररिपुमपि क्षोभमनयत्।
स्मरोऽपि त्वां नत्वा रतिनयनलेह्येन वपुषा
मुनीनामप्यन्तः प्रभवति हि मोहाय महताम्॥

*haristvāmārādhyā praṇatajana saubhāgya janānīm
purā nārī bhūtvā puraripumapi kṣobhamanayat ।
smaro 'api tvāṁ natvā ratinayanalehyena vapuṣā
munināmapyantaḥ prabhavati hi mohāya mahatām ॥*

O Great Mother, once the great Mahāviṣṇu, having
worshiped you (well known as the bestower of
happiness on all those who are devoted to you),
changed himself into a woman of exquisite beauty.
He caused agitation even in the mind of the great Śiva,
well known for his restraint as the burner of the three cities.
Kāma, the god of love, whose body is invisible,
smears his erotic enjoyability on those whom he chooses;
they are licked by the goddess of erotics and thereby
confusion is caused, even in the minds of great sages
who are well established in their meditations.



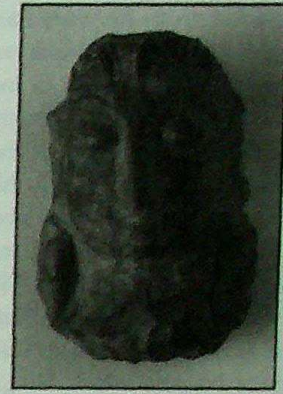
The reference here is to the story of the churning of the
ocean of milk by the *devas*, the shining ones, and the *asuras*,
the dark forces. According to this myth, the milk ocean is
the abode of Viṣṇu, the god who preserves the universe. It
is also the realm of all specific values. As it is the realm of
actual life, it is also the battleground of the bright and dark forces, the
devas and *asuras*, respectively. Both of these forces were vying with one
another for immortality and supremacy over life. Brahmā the creator
advised them to churn the ocean of life to gain the elixir of immortality.
As the churning could not be done by any group separately, it was agreed

as a joint endeavor. The great Mount Mandara was used as the churning rod. Just as the ocean of life is beginningless, it is also said to have no bottom. Therefore, it became necessary to find a ground for the churning rod to rest upon. Viṣṇu, being the preserver, changed into a turtle and provided that ground. The rope used for churning was none other than the great serpent Ananta, endless time. The shining ones were holding the tail and the demons were at the head.

Tradition runs that as a result of the churning fourteen precious things appeared one by one on the surface of the milk ocean. These were: Airāvata (the celestial white elephant); *gadā* (the mace); *kaumodakī* (the *pārijāta* tree); Uccaiśśravas (the white horse); Kāmadhenu (the desire-granting cow); *śaṅkha* (the conch shell); *candra* (the crescent moon); Lakṣmī (goddess of grace and abundance); *dhanuḥ* (the great bow); Astreya (virgin of the stars); *kaustubha* (the jewel of great luster); Rambhā (the celestial nymph of great beauty); Dhānvantari (god of medicine); and *amṛta* (the elixir of immortality).

After all the churning, the snake was so agitated that it vomited *kālakūṭa* (the world poison) and all the *devas* and *asuras* were terrified at the sight. To calm the fears of all, Śiva drank the poison and saved the world. Then, as soon as the *amṛta* was out of the ocean, a demon snatched it away from the god Dhānvantari and ran away. It was the wish of all the gods that the demon forces not become immortal by partaking of the *amṛta*. So at this critical moment, Viṣṇu turned to the Universal Mother in great devotion. It was with her grace that he changed himself into the very incarnation of beauty and assumed the name Mohinī, the grand seductress. Upon seeing her, all were charmed and even the demon gladly handed over the bowl of *amṛta*. After this incident, Śiva remembered how beautiful Viṣṇu looked as a woman and wanted to see her form again. This is referred to here as Viṣṇu causing agitation to Śiva, the god of restraint.

The *Saundaryalaharī*, composed to glorify beauty as the highest form of truth and goodness, treats beauty as a deluding force as well as an emancipating one, and in doing so refers to one of the most difficult epistemological stumbling blocks in the field of philosophy. This is the paradox around which center problems like the One and the many, being and becoming, and the transcendental and the immanent. Here Tripurāntaka, the god of destruction, is allegorically said to be in love with the manifestation of Tripurasundarī, the goddess of beauty, which is not possible without



Face of the goddess. Stone sculpture, India. Date unknown.

The goddess in her many transformations highlights the various faces of beauty with its attractions and paradoxes.

causing violation to his own nature. This paradox is really the hardest crux of philosophy. Rāmānuja overcomes it with a revision of Śāṅkara's *anirvacanīya khyāti*, the error of indeterminism. According to Śāṅkara, this paradox is like the assumption that the wave has a reality other than the water or that the blue color of the sky has a reality other than that of the sky itself. These, according to him, are transitory projections which are neither real nor unreal. In the above-mentioned story, the exciting beauty of the illusory seductress was only a momentary phenomenon superimposed on the reality of Viṣṇu who was never a female. Similarly, the universe is a phenomenal superimposition, in the form of Nature, on Śiva, the eternal principle of transcendence, who is free of all the triple qualities of Nature, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. The Real is unchanging. The water is real, making the wave unreal. By the same token, the world is unreal and only Śiva is real.

This position of Śāṅkara is reviewed, criticized, and rejected by Rāmānuja. So long as water remains, one wave will be replaced by another wave, and the nature of water causing a wave is as real as the water itself. Therefore, the principle of waves has a reality in which the reality of the water itself participates. We find this same position stated in this verse of Śāṅkara, who must have corrected his earlier position in this book of hymns which he wrote after completing all of his major commentaries on the *Bhagavad-Gītā*, the Upaniṣads, and the *Brahma-Sūtras*. In this revised sense, it is Śiva, the burner of the three cities, providing the ground for the manifestation of beauty in all the three cities.

The science of semantics in India is called *sphoṭadarśana*. *Sphoṭa* means to burst. It has an abruptness: there is no time needed for the meaning to come to the mind after listening to the word. The meaning of each word is triggered forth by the articulated sound itself. Beauty also has this arresting quality. Its impact on the senses and mind is like a flash of lightning. The esoteric study implied in this is called *sādhya siddha āsana vidyā*. *Sādhya* means the possibility of attainment. *Siddha* means what is actually attained. *Āsana* is a posture or foundation. And *vidyā* means science. In other words, it is called the science of actualizing the potential implied in the possible.

Verse Six

धनुः पौष्पं मौर्वी मधुकरमयी पञ्च विशिखा
वसन्तः सामन्तो मलयमरुदायोधनरथः।
तथाप्येकः सर्वं हिमगिरिसुते कामपि कृपा-
मपाङ्गात् ते लब्ध्वा जगदिदमनङ्गो विजयते॥

*dhanuḥ pauṣpaṁ maurvī madhukaramayī pañca viśikhā
vasantaḥ sāmanto malaya marudāyodhana rathaḥ ।
tathāpyekah sarvaṁ himagirisute kāmapi kṛpām-
apāṅgāt te labdhvā jagadidamanaṅgo vijayate ॥*

O Daughter of the Snowy Peak, just deriving from your
glance askance whatsoever grace he could,
With flowery bow and bumblebee string,
and five-flowered dart and springtide for minister,
All these as one withal, mounting the chariot
of the mountain breeze, he victorious reigns, the god of love.



According to Indian mythological tradition, *Śiva* was at one time immersed in blissful contemplation on Mount Kailāsa in the Himalayas. Wanting *Śiva* to generate progeny to aid in the scheme of genesis, the *devas* sent Kāma, the god of desire, to excite *Śiva*. They wanted him to approach the goddess Umā or Pārvatī, who is praised in this work as the Universal Mother. To obtain *Śiva* as her husband, Pārvatī had undergone severe penance; yet *Śiva* refused to stir from meditation and leave his state of bliss when the god of desire came near. Trusting in the grace of the Universal Mother, Kāma shot his flowery arrows at *Śiva* in order to arouse his erotics. Irritated by Kāma's behavior, *Śiva* opened his third eye, which is also the eye of illumination, and by its power the god Kāma was burnt to ashes.

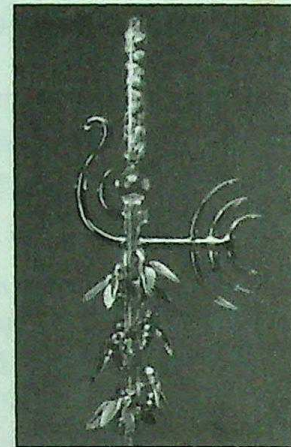
When the *devas* found that their scheme had failed, they sent Agni, the god of fire, to *Śiva*. Agni obtained a germ of *Śiva* in the form of a sixfold spark from his third eye. These rays entered the Himalayan lake Śaravaṇa and each ray turned into a divine child. The heavenly stars the

Pleides, known as *kṛttikās*, who according to legend are the wives of six *ṛṣis*, offered their breasts to these children. When the Divine Mother realized they were born of *Śiva*, she embraced them in love and they became one child with six heads. This child is called Subrahmaṇya or Ṣaṇmukha. Even though the god of love was burned away by a look from *Śiva*'s third eye, he was granted continued existence in a disembodied state through the Mother's supplication.

This verse has a reference to *anaṅgavidyā* (the science of love). The god of love, Kāma, is the *ṛṣi* associated with the meditation of this verse's *yantra*. Kāma, meaning desire, is also called Smara (remembrance) and Manmatha (agitator of the mind). He serves the Mother as a dedicated instrument, causing attractions between people and, hence, the Mother showers her grace on him. This aspect of the Mother is very much that of Venus or Aphrodite, and Kāma is similar to Eros.

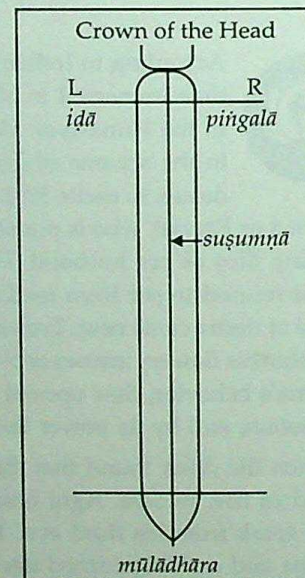
The seed *mantra* is here given as *klīm* and it is called *kāmabīja* (seed of love). When this seed *mantra* is meditated within the body, the first three *mantras* are to be arranged vertically along the axis of the *cakras*, first at the *viśuddhi* (the throat), then at the *ājñā* (between the eyebrows), and then at the *sahasrāra* (the crown of the head). The lower *mantras* are also arranged vertically: beginning with the *maṇipūra* (the solar plexus), up to the *svādhiṣṭhāna* (the genitals) and ending at the *mūlādhāra* (the tip of the spine). The three lower placements represent *Śakti*, the three higher ones represent *Śiva*, and the desires of the three lower ones are to be related to the three higher ones. The heart is treated as the equating center between these two pairs.

The desires related to the *maṇipūra*, with regard to the beloved, are to know the nature of the beloved and to become identical with it through a process of exosmosis and endosmosis. In this scheme of meditation, the *viśuddhi* is the corresponding counterpart to the *maṇipūra*. The devotee recites psalms and hymns and praises to the beloved, God, and chants the *mantra*. While the *mantra* is being chanted, the *Śakti* aspect is conceived in the *maṇipūra* and the *Śiva* aspect is conceived in the *viśuddhi*, and a figure-of-eight movement is made by the mind, relating these two aspects in the heart. After this, in the same way, the *svādhiṣṭhāna* and the *mūlādhāra* are related, respectively, to the *ājñā* and the *sahasrāra*. The desires at the *svādhiṣṭhāna* level are to participate in the love of the beloved, or the divine. The desires of the *mūlādhāra* level are to participate in the immortality of the beloved. This is achieved by raising the *kuṇḍalinī*,



Arpa de Aveja (Bee Harp), Susan Plum. Lampwork glass, fired lusters, metal, paint and gold leaf, America, 1992.

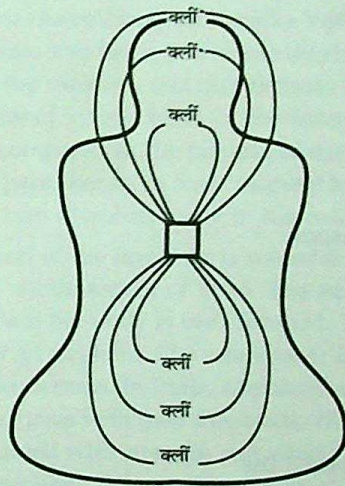
With "flowery bow and bumblebee string", Kāma, the god of love, acts as the agent of attraction and procreation for the Devī.



VERSE SIX | 19

cutting across the *suṣumnā*, the central channel of the *prāṇa*, and bringing it to the *sahasrāra*.

The three pairs here are also to be looked upon as the triple aspect of *satcidānanda*. The *mūlādhāra-sahasrāra* pair refers to the *sat* (existential aspect); the *svādhiṣṭhāna-ājñā* pair refers to the *cit* (subsistence aspect); and the *maṇipūra-viśuddhi* pair refers to the *ānanda* (value aspect).



klīm

Verse Seven

क्वणत्काञ्चीदामा करिकलभकुम्भस्तननता
परिक्षीणा मध्ये परिणतशरच्चन्द्रवदना।
धनुर्बाणान् पाशं सृणिमपि दधाना करतलैः
पुरस्तादास्तां नः पुरमथितुराहोपुरुषिका॥

*kvaṇat kāñcīdāmā karikalabha kumbhastananatā
parikṣiṇā madhye pariṇataśaraccandra vadanā ।
dhanurbāṇān pāśaṁ sṛṇimapi dadhānā karatalaiḥ
purast ādāstāṁ naḥ puramathiturāho puruṣikā ॥*

Let that dominant counter-ego form of the city burner,
through the jingling of her waist-band, bending by the bosom,
resembling bulges on an elephant's front,
very thin at the waist, with a face like the full moon,
Appear before us, holding aloft in her hands
bow with arrow, noose with goad.



The Mother as a deity is worshiped in three aspects: the gross (*sthūla*), the subtle (*sūkṣma*), and the transcendental (*parā*). The present verse describes her in the gross form. In the book *Rahasyanāma Sahasra*, this gross form is recommended as one that can be visualized by the devotee.

Though the Devī is usually called Tripurasundarī (the beautifier of the three cities) in contrast to her male counterpart, Tripurāntaka (the burner of the three cities) in this verse she is addressed as the counter ego form of the burner of the three cities. An unusual word is used, *puruṣika*. *Puruṣa* means a man and the reference is particularly to the quality of masculinity. *Puruṣika* is, however, in the feminine gender. It means, paradoxically, the feminine form of masculinity. In other words, when the masculine in the female is understood in its most pronounced and powerful manifestation, it can be called *puruṣika*. In verse five, we have seen how Śiva, the annihilator, was shown to be so tempted by the beauty manifested in the preserving deity Viṣṇu that against his own nature he assumed the role

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of creator. This verse balances that asymmetry by bringing over the masculine quality of *Śiva* to the *Dēvī* by calling her *puruṣika*. The analogies make our minds go from the subtle to the gross backward and forward and thereby present, in one and the same form, the attributes of the gross, subtle and transcendent.

The world of manifestation called *bhava* is an endless chain of becoming. Every moment is said to be giving birth to the world of that moment. This idea has resemblance to Kṣaṇika Vijñānavāda, according to which the world comes into being in the first third of a moment, remains for another third of the moment, and disintegrates in the final third, with the antecedent moment giving birth to the following moment. These sequences are here compared to the tinkling of the bells in the girdles of the Creatrice as she paces her steps from moment to moment creating the world, which in its turn dissolves away in her own counterpart, *Śiva*.

The tinkling sound of the tiny bells is something so soft and sublime that it refers to the subtle aspect of *Dēvī*. The next reference is to the heavy breasts by which her body is bent forward. They are compared to the hard forehead of an elephant. The reference is far from anything that suggests beauty or tenderness. In India, elephants are tamed to do heavy work such as pushing trees with their foreheads. Thus, in an Indian mind, the elephant is associated with strength and vitality. The Creatrice is also the Mother who nourishes the creatures born of her. The will to live which is seen in all living beings has a dynamics and push which is hard to counter, and in the description of *māyā* as a creative force it is sometimes called *pradhāna* (creative dynamics) because its power of actualization is tremendous. The light steps of the Mother associated with the tinkling of the bells and her powerful dynamism of creativity, when taken together, produce the complexity of creation in which matter and spirit are mysteriously blended.

The stress on the harsh and dynamic vitality of the Mother is indicated in the image of the heavy breasts. It is balanced by other analogies, one which describes the very slender waist below, *parikṣiṇa* and the other which visualizes the face above. In the iconographic presentation of the female deity, a structure in the form of a figure-of-eight movement is usually adopted, and the waist is indicated by the central crossing over in this movement. This being a verse to be meditated upon in the *maṇipūra*,



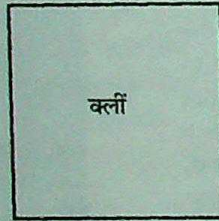
A yakṣi, female nature spirit. Polished sandstone carving. Bihar, India, first century BCE, Indian Museum, Calcutta.

Traditional beauty in women, in Indian culture, implied large breasts, thin waists, and ample hips, with the resulting shape an allusion to the figure-of-eight sign for the eternal. Goddesses as well as human women exemplified these characteristics.

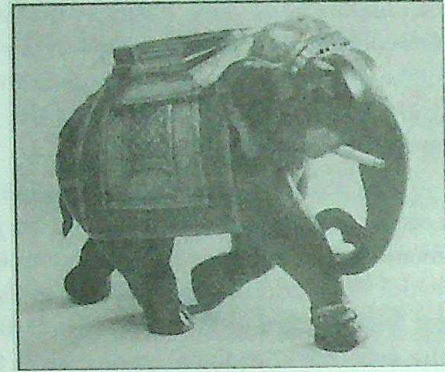


the solar plexus, the description of the Devī ends with the waist and the devotee is to supply the lower part of the figure-of-eight with her own body. The face is here compared to the full moon of the summer season. The original Sanskrit word used here is *pariṇata śarat candra vadanā*. *Pariṇata* means transformed and does not necessarily mean the full moon. It can be the changing aspect of the waxing and waning of the moon. Taken in that sense, the deity can be visible or invisible and can have many changing phases.

This verse has a single *bīja-mantra*, *klīm*, which is to be meditated upon in the *maṇipūra*. The symbols in the Devī's hands, such as the bow and arrows, and the noose and goad mark the frame of reference for this meditation. In these, the bow represents the mind; the five arrows, the five senses; the noose, love in the form of attachment; and the goad, the negative propensities of the mind.



klīm



Carved mango wood elephant, Rajasthan, India, twentieth century.

In India feminine beauty is often compared to an elephant's physical traits, especially to the forehead bulges and the ponderous, swinging gait.

Verse Eight

सुधासिन्धोर्मध्ये सुरविटपिवाटीपरिवृते
मणिद्वीपे नीपोपवनवति चिन्तामणिगृहे।
शिवाकारे मञ्चे परमशिवपर्यङ्कनिलयां
भजन्ति त्वां धन्याः कतिचन चिदानन्दलहरीम्॥

*sudhā sindhormadhye suraviṭapi vāṭī parivṛte
maṇidvīpe nīpopavanavati cintāmaṇigrhe ।
śivākāre mañce paramaśivaparyāṅka nilayāṁ
bhajanti tvāṁ dhanyāḥ katicana cidānandalaharīm ॥*

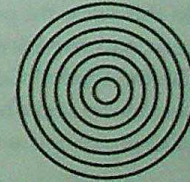
Some men of rare fulfillment meditate on you
as the ecstatic bliss of the supreme Self, seated on a couch
of Śiva-form and having the supreme Śiva for a mattress,
placed in a garden of the *kadamba* trees, on an island of pearls,
in a priceless mansion of consciousness surrounded by trees
of paradise, in an infinite ocean of divine nectar.



This verse refers to a *maṇḍala* with seven circles. A symbol for meditation, a *maṇḍala* is similar to a gestalt which makes a unified, meaningful configuration. This configuration can be a physical, semantic, or value formation. As the structure varies in different ensembles, *maṇḍalas* are of many types.

One of the great dictums (*mahāvākyas*) is *ayam ātma brahma* (This Self is the Absolute). In this dictum *brahma* stands for the Absolute in its all-inclusive, cosmological sense, and *ātma* refers to the individual locus of consciousness from which the radiating consciousness can reach out to and pervade all that comes within the aegis of the Absolute. The *maṇḍala* given for this verse, which is one of seven concentric circles, implies the secret of the above-given *mahāvākya*.

The first circle, which marks the most exterior region, is described here as an infinite ocean of divine nectar. In ordinary science, a probe into reality is made by first postulating a hypothesis and then experientially ascertaining its validity. In the spiritual science of realization, there are



also these two steps. Instead of formulating a tentative hypothesis, the guru or the scripture gives a conceptual picture of what is to be realized. Visualizing that picture is called initiation. What is semantically initiated is thereafter perceived through contemplation and meditation until it is experienced as a reality. The semantic visualization belongs to *cit*. Experience is the existential manifestation of that visualization and belongs to *sat*. Where the manifestation identifies the *sat* and the *cit* as one total experience, it affects the realizing consciousness as a blissful state. Hence, the dominant aspect of the Absolute in a spiritual experience is *ānanda*. Spiritual bliss (*ānanda*), which epistemologically is referred to as the ground of all values, is described poetically as honey or elixir. Here it is called an infinite ocean of nectar. Though an ocean is boundless, a man looking at it from his ship may see it encircled by the horizon. Like that the outer *maṇḍala* circle should be looked upon as boundless, though for the purpose of meditation one may mark it with a curved line.

It is traditionally recognized in Vedānta that one becomes what one meditates upon. When a guru gives his sacred advice for meditation on the Absolute, it is ingeniously worded to show the order in which one has to meditate. The *upadeśavākya* (the dictum of instruction and advice) is *tat tvam asi* (That thou art). This is very significant. Here the first word refers to *Brahman* (the Absolute). One has to meditate first on the Absolute until all vestiges of duality and finitude are removed from consciousness. When the individual consciousness transcends the finitude of individuality, it regains its original state of the non-dual infinite. Thus, the "thou" aspect is not to be meditated upon. The inquiring mind itself is the "thou" and it loses its identity in "that." Following the same scheme, the infinite *ānanda* aspect of the Absolute is presented here as the initial *maṇḍala* of meditation.

God is the first cause in all theistic religions. In atheistic religions or schools of thought, a primordial substance, such as matter in modern science, is postulated as having all the potentials to unfold itself in the course of time. In religion it is a question of manifestation, whereas in science it is one of evolution. In this verse the primordial cause, the nectar of the spirit, is presented in the second *maṇḍala* circle which is placed within the first as a field of creation. Like the Biblical Genesis which presents a vegetative world with water, air, sun, moon, and a heavenly garden to be the habitation of man, this second *maṇḍala* is pictured as *suraviṭapivāṭi*. *Sura* means divine; *viṭapa* is a tree;



Bi (or Pi) disc. Carved Jade. China, nineteenth century (Qing dynasty).

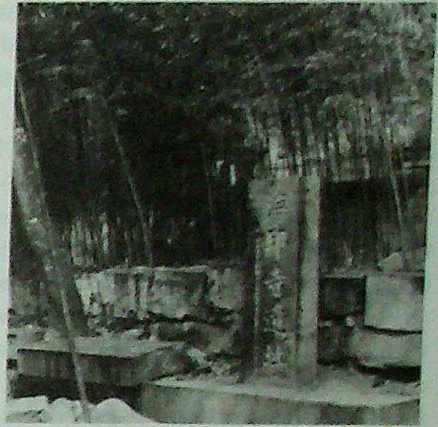
Dating in use from the Shang dynasty, carved jade discs were ritual artefacts that were important in imperial functions and considered auspicious in both form and use. They were seen by the Chinese as potent symbols of Heaven and Earth and the four cardinal directions. The outer circle corresponded to the masculine (yang), Heaven, with the inner hole representing the feminine (yin), Earth. This Chinese symbolism corresponds to Indian iconography of male-female relationships.

and *vāṭī* is a garden of divine trees. The concept is very much the same as the Biblical Garden of Paradise.

From this we pass on to the matrix of values. As space and time are inconceivable terms unless related to an observer's mind, a value has no significance where there is no mind to judge it. What is basic to value is its affectivity, and hence a circumlimitation is to be made in the field of infinite bliss to make it capable of manifesting itself as experienced bliss. This third *maṇḍala* circle is therefore called the island of the pearls of consciousness. Within this island an environment for spiritual meditation is envisaged with reference to the next *maṇḍala* circle, the fourth, as the garden of the *kadamba* trees. The blue of the sky and the ocean are associated in the mind of Indian poets as symbolic of the infinite. The *kadamba* tree in the spring season is overladen with bunches of blue flowers, and is associated with the childhood pranks of Kṛṣṇa. The very mention of the *kadamba* tree brings the idea of Kṛṣṇa. Hence, the mention of the garden of the *kadamba* trees is only to create a poetic atmosphere.

In the ancient *āśramas* (spiritual homes of wisdom teachers), there was always a special grove dedicated for meditation and penance. These groves are called *tapovana*. In this garden of *kadamba* trees is located the *tapogṛha*, the special house for meditation. In this verse, that is called the *cintāmaṇigṛha* and is marked here as the fifth *maṇḍala* circle. It means the house of the pearls of consciousness. In this house is located the *maṇḍala* that has to serve as the altar for the deity. The base of the altar is called *śivākāramaṇica*. *Maṇica* means the couch resting on four legs; *ākāra* means form; and *Śiva* means the Absolute. In the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad* the Absolute is described as *catuṣpāda* (the four-limbed). The Absolute that is symbolized with *auri* also has four quarters. They are the four aspects of consciousness: the wakeful or objective, the dream or subjective, the unconscious, and the transcendental. Here the same is conceived to be an altar stand within the *maṇḍala*. This comes as the sixth circle.

The seventh circle is referred to as a mattress of eternal consciousness, termed here as *paramaśivaparyāṅka*. *Parama* means the Absolute; *Śiva* means a state of harmony, peace and auspiciousness; *paryāṅka* means a mattress. In Indian iconography the seat of the deity is very important. Brahmā has a lotus for his seat. The seat of the deity of this *maṇḍala* is the Absolute itself. Within the seven concentric circles of this *maṇḍala*, the



Bamboo grove. Laoshan Temple, Shantung, China.

This grove of bamboo at a Taoist temple and monastery in China is a place for meditation. The young bamboo shoots are carved with the characters of poems and prayers.

deity is marked as the central locus. She is here depicted in her transcendental state, not the gross one of the previous verse, and is described as the ecstatic bliss of supreme consciousness (*citānandalaharī*).

The meditation of this verse is one of the most important disciplines in Tantra and it is known as *śrīvidyā*. The *yantra* used for *śrīvidyā* is the *Śrīcakra*. It is drawn with four triangles interposed one over the other with base up and with five triangles interposed one over the other with the apex up. The center is marked with a dot. A *Śrīcakra* is usually made on a gold or silver plate in which the triangles are marked with precious stones and the plate is worshiped with external rituals. Or the *Śrīcakra* is visualized in the heart and meditated upon as explained in this commentary. The external worship is called *bahirākāśapūjā* and the meditation in the heart is called *daharākāśapūjā*. Those who desire to visualize the deity with form think of the couch as Mount Kailāsa and the seat as the lap of *Śiva*, and they see the deity as the most beautiful incarnation of womanhood (*Tripurasundarī*).



Maṇḍala. Embossed copper plate, India, twentieth century.

One of the many types of maṇḍala used for the goddess worship discipline of Tantra.

Verse Nine

महीं मूलाधारे कमपि मणिपूरे हुतवहं
स्थितं स्वाधिष्ठाने हृदि मरुतमाकाशमुपरि।
मनोऽपि भ्रूमध्ये सकलमपि भित्त्वा कुलपथं
सहस्रारे पद्मे सह रहसि पत्या विहरसे॥

*mahīm-mūlādhāre kamapi maṇipūre hutavaham
sthitam svādhiṣṭhāne hṛdi marutam ākāśamupari ।
mano 'pi bhrūmadhye sakalamapi bhittvā kulapatham
sahasrāre padme saha rahasi patyā viharase ॥*

The earth place in the *mūlādhāra*, water in the *maṇipūra*,
Fire in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*, air in the heart, with space above,
And amid eyebrows placing the mind,
while breaking through, You do sport with your Lord secretly
in the thousand-petaled lotus.



In the previous verse the relation of the individual self to the universal Self was represented through a *maṇḍala* of seven concentric circles. In this verse we are given a functional structure for the relation of the personal self to the universal Self. The macrocosm in Sanskrit is called *brahmāṇḍa*, *aṇḍa* meaning an egg from which the expanding universe is endlessly projecting its various nebular and stellar systems. The same is taken as a model of the causal origin of the microcosmic world. An individual system that generates, projects, and unfolds itself as the unitary function of an organism is called *pinḍāṇḍa*. Though in the quantitative and, for that reason, in the qualitative expression, the infinitely vast universe with its fire-spitting stars and swirling clouds of nebulae is different from a living organism, both belong to the same homogeneous principle, which is the source of all elements and elementals.

The Sāṅkhyan concept of the Absolute as a dual principle of spirit (*puruṣa*) and nature (*prakṛti*) is revalued and accepted by Vedānta and Tantra. In the Vedāntic context, the Absolute is seen as having both a

changeless vertical status, in the present context *Śiva*, and an ever-horizontalizing state of emanation or manifestation, which in the present text is attributed to the Devī as *Śakti*. The spirit or *Śiva* aspect of the Absolute, while being homogeneous, changeless, indivisible, whole and attributeless, should be considered as the ground of all existence (*sat*). It is also the pure self-luminous principle of consciousness that relates, integrates, and provides the universe itself with an eye to see its magnitude and a mind to ponder over its complexity (*cit*). Finally, it is the grand plethora of value systems ranging from causal efficiency to finality, which are treated in this text as *ānanda*.

If generic *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda* construct the vertical axis of the Absolute, the ontological and existential causality that sparks off in all directions is the primal *Śakti* that assumes innumerable specific complexities to proliferate as *prakṛti*. *Prakṛti* literally means that which duplicates, replicates, and proliferates. What corresponds to the *cit* in *prakṛti* is its articulation, communication, and passive expression. These come through the spoken or written word, through indicative signs and symbols, or through provision for semantic and noetic comprehension.

Sat, *cit*, and *ānanda* become reversed, as if they were casting their own shadows into three forms of negative functions, a process usually referred to in the Vedāntic context as *pratyagātmā* (the pure Self) changing over into *cidābhāsa* (the apparent self). As the phenomenal world is constituted by these triple negative forces, the entire empirical experience has in reality only negative status, though it becomes very pronounced as the gross and objective facts of experience. Thus, ironically, the positive fact of *Śiva* looks negative and the negative *Śakti* is counted as dynamic and positive.

The triple forces hinted at here are those of *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. *Ānanda* is operating in its horizontal function as *sattva*, *cit* as *rajas*, and *sat* as *tamas*. All creations or projections are operations involving the transformation, of one aspect of *sattva* into another aspect. The formal and qualitative state of the material for transformation, the process of transformation, and the end result of transformation are all attended by specific modulations of *cit*. The value dynamics remaining in the material chosen for transformation as a causal factor and its unfolding into an actualized final cause belong to *ānanda*. Vedānta does not see any duality in the material, efficient, and final causes; hence, in Sanskrit this non-dual aspect of creation



The eyes of the goddess. Painted statue, twentieth century.

The two physical eyes represent awareness of the physical world with its dimensions of time and space. Between them is the red bindi dot indicating the bindu (locus of consciousness), which is often found at the center of maṇḍalas. Above the bindi dot is the crescent moon, symbol of Śiva, and the third eye or fully opened eye of wisdom and realization.

is called *abhinnanimitta upādāna kāraṇa*. *Abhinna* means inseparable; *nimitta* is efficient; and *upādāna* is the material which is undergoing change through the unfolding of the final cause. When a potter makes a pot, the clay is the material cause, the potter is the efficient cause, and the image of the pot in the potter's mind which finally becomes actualized as the pot is the final cause. Thus understood, all of nature, which includes the starry heavens above and the animated system here with its complexities, its moral and social orders, is only a series of transformations.

The first stage of transformation is conceived of as a process of quintiplication. Principles of five elements are projected, each with its own qualitative characteristics. The first in the series is *ākāśa*; it has no equivalent term in English. Aspects of a number of terms such as sky, ether, space, time, and ground are to be put together to form an integrated concept which stands for *ākāśa*. The definition of *ākāśa* in the Sāṃkhya Darśana is *avakāśadātrī*, that which makes it possible for an object to exist. The space occupied by an object is, as it were, donated by *ākāśa*. We may say the entirety of space is one aspect of *ākāśa*. In the *Bṛhadāraṇyaka Upaniṣad* Yājñavalkya teaches Gārgī that the warp and the woof of the universe is *ākāśa*, and that the structure of the Absolute is in *ākāśa*. It is to be known as both spiritual and non-spiritual. Its quality is vibration. As vibration indicates direction of movement, kinetic frequencies, and dynamics, the sequential quality of *ākāśa* produces time. Thus *ākāśa* as a manifested reality becomes the time-space continuum. It is also to be conceived of as a unified field in which everything functions according to the assigned nature of each element. In fact, *ākāśa* becomes the first step towards physical creation. As sound, which in its graded operation controls the entire field of the noetics and semiotics of the world of conception and expression, *ākāśa* becomes the ground of mental, psychic, and spiritual manifestations, which find their natural home in the world of elements.

In the natural process of creation, the next property has to necessarily be touch, contact, cohesion, and reaction. All these characterize the second element, air, which is more pronouncedly materialistic. *Vāyu* (air) is, in one sense, *ākāśa* a bit more horizontalized. The Sanskrit word *vāyu*, though translated as air, should not be looked upon as a gas. It is actually the great womb of fusion and combustion which generates all the physical elements, gaseous, liquid, and solid. According to the Nyāya and Vaiśeṣika

schools of Indian philosophy, the basic material of the physical universe is *paramāṇu*. *Parama* means absolute and *aṇu* means a monad. It has no dimensions except a mathematical location. Only by the coming together or contact and structural cohesion of several *paramāṇus* is one *aṇu* (atom) generated. *Vāyu* is the field for generation of *aṇus* (atoms). Hence, it is misleading to identify it with the air, which is only a phenomenon of the atmosphere. The other property of *vāyu* symbolizes the realization of the possible on the ground of the actual. Therefore, the higher functioning of the mind in spiritual visions, psychic experiences, intuitions, and revelations are all considered aspects of the manifestation of *vāyu*.

The third element is fire (*agni*), which is easily associated with thermodynamics and luminosity. When the basic elements of the two earlier emanations from *prakṛti*, *ākāśa*, and *vāyu* horizontalize still further, frictions, combustions, and fissures multiply a billionfold and the unified field of *ākāśa* becomes filled with innumerable patterns of radiation in the form of light and heat. While on the existential level this third element is identified with fire, in the world of consciousness it is seen as the lower mind and its several propensities. Between mind and matter the role of *agni* can be observed in all positive and active emergence, and in all the creative functionings of biological, biochemical, psychophysical, and psychochemical processes. Its major role, however, is as a complement to sound, and as that factor which produces the boundless network of visual forms on which rest all perceptual experiences. The empirical world can be seen dichotomously as a combination of name and form. That is why the eminent physicist Erwin Schrodinger defined the world as a construct of percepts and concepts. These first three elements, *ākāśa*, *vāyu*, and *agni*, so very fundamental to life, constitute the first three steps in creation. The gross, material body of a concrete manifestation comes from the two succeeding elements, water and earth.

One of the greatest miracles is the transformation of a gas into a liquid. When two hydrogen atoms are joined with one oxygen, both gases change their natural properties and give way to something entirely new. The invisible becomes visible. It can be touched. Its form can be seen. It satisfies most of our notions of the concrete world. Further, it is the first major rung in the evolutionary ladder where lifeless matter becomes animated. Just as modern science considers water the necessary medium to generate the first form of life, Indian mythology visualizes the first

occurrence of life in water. They even name God as *nārāyaṇa*, *naram* meaning water and *āyana* meaning dwelling. Nārāyaṇa thus means the one who dwells in water. Water is the symbol of vitality and all forms of emotion, ranging from aesthetic feeling to the highest forms of mystical exaltation. Finally, there emerges the end limit of gross manifestation in the form of earth. The earth in principle stands for everything gross, concrete, and objective. It is the ontological, existential base of life and the quality of earth is fragrance or smell.

In the scheme of Sāṃkhyan evolution, the five elements given above cannot exist in a pure form independent of one another; rather they combine according to a certain scheme of proportion. In Sanskrit the process of quintiplication is called *pañcīkaraṇa*. In this process, each element is divided into two and one of these halves is divided into four. One-fourth of each element is assigned to the other four elements. Thus, each of the five elements contains one-eighth part of all elements.

The cosmic functioning of the universe is attributed to Tripurasundarī, the principle of beauty in three spheres. Its counterpart which functions in the individual organism is called *kuṇḍalīnī*. In its gross aspect, *kuṇḍalīnī* is looked upon as a vital force having for its instruments the central nervous system, the respiratory system and the circulatory system. Anything that conducts air, energy, or liquid from one part of the body to another is called *nāḍī*. The Tantric system considers the area between the anus and the genitals as the base of the *nāḍī* system. It believes that in this place nine major *nāḍīs* branch off, each splitting further into individual systems taking care of specific functions. It is believed that there are 72,000 such individual units apart from the several billion capillaries. In fact, every particle of the body has its own spiritual and material aspect.

From the above-said base, three *nāḍīs* are vertically arranged running through the spine and reaching the crown of the head. These three *nāḍīs* are called the *īḍā* (the left side), the *piṅgalā* (the right side), and the *suṣumṇā* (the central channel). On this vertical arrangement six synergic fields are located. They are the *mūlādhāra*, basal foundation; *svādhiṣṭhāna* (psychic base); *maṇipūra* (solar plex); *anāhata* (heart plex); *viśuddhi* (throat plex); and *ājñā* (the place between the eyebrows). The 72,000 systems of *nāḍīs* have their correspondence with these six synergic fields. These *nāḍīs* are operated upon by three types of dynamics, which are known as *icchāśakti*

(volitional dynamics), *jñānaśakti* (knowledge dynamics), and *kriyāśakti* (action dynamics). The unconscious and involuntary functions of the body are attributed to the *kriyāśakti* of the individual body. The unknown plan by which the various cosmic systems operate and by which natural phenomena cause the cyclic changes in the world are attributed to the *karmaśakti* of Tripurasundarī. *Jñānaśakti* comes from the primordial *cit* aspect of the Absolute. In its purest state it has no duality and no dichotomous division of subject and object. When *cit* horizontalizes and becomes *caitanya*, it becomes individuated. In a further state of horizontalization, it becomes the *caitanya* (animating consciousness) of the individual splitting into the consciousness of subject and object.

The subjective consciousness having for its central reference the idea of "I" is called *ahantā*. Consciousness in the form of impressions, formal identification, and ideas of relation and value constitute the objective counterpart and are called *idantā*. When knowledge is circumlimited as subjective or objective it is called *sopādhika*. When knowledge is freed of this limitation and shines as pure consciousness, it is *ātmaajñāna* (Self-knowledge). The empirical consciousness constituted of countless objects and corresponding ego relations is called *anātmaajñāna* (the knowledge of the non-Self). When a thing in itself is known in its truest nature, knowledge is called *yathārtha* (real knowledge). When one thing is mistaken for another it is called *ayathārthajñāna*. All forms of knowledge relating to the subject as "I" and "mine" are *jīvaajñāna* (individual knowledge). And all sense impressions are *indriyajñāna* (knowledge of the senses). The varieties of knowledge enumerated here come under the category of *jñānaśakti* of the *kuṇḍalinī*. It is the part of the universe which is often referred to as the will of God.

The *cakras* are arranged according to a sound system. The *idā* and the *piṅgalā* are like two spiral ganglia beginning from the *mūlādhāra* and ending respectively, in the *nāḍīs* that regulate the breath of the left and right nostrils. The modern concept of the DNA and the RNA double helixes looks very similar to that of the *idā* and *piṅgalā*. The only difference is the postulate of the *susumṇā* as a third column in which the other two have to find their integration for final absorption (*samādhi*). This structural picture is to be understood as complementary to the *maṇḍalas* described in the previous verse.

Verse Ten

सुधाधारासारैश्चरणयुगलान्तर्विगलितैः

प्रपञ्चं सिञ्चन्ती पुनरपि रसाम्नायमहसः।

अवाप्य स्वां भूमिं भुजगनिभमध्युष्टवलयं

स्वामात्मानं कृत्वा स्वपिषि कुलकुण्डे कुहरिणि॥

*sudhādhārā sārāis carāṇayugaḷāntarvigaḷitaiḥ
prapañcam siñcantī punarapi rasāmnāya mahasah ।
avāpya svām bhūmim bhujaḡanibham adhyuṣṭavalayaṁ
svamātmānam kṛtvā svapiṣi kulakuṇḍe kuhariṇi ॥*

O Mother! You reside in the body as *kuṇḍalinī*
at the base of the *nāḍīs*, in the form of a serpent
making a *maṇḍala* and sleeping in the hollow of it,
having found your home there. The joy in which
you are bathed is none other than the nectar of immortality
that drips from the tips of your own toes,
as you are the same Tripurasundarī who nourishes the universe.

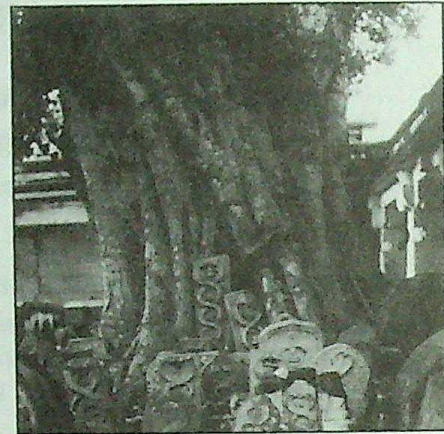


This verse makes special reference to the *kuṇḍalinī*, to the *nāḍīs*, and to the *cakras*. The three major *nāḍīs* which run downward from the *ājñā* to the *mūlādhāra* are the *idā* on the left side, the *piṅgalā* on the right side, and the *suṣumnā* in the middle. These *nāḍīs* are divided into three sections horizontally. The region which includes the *mūlādhāra* and the *svādhiṣṭhāna* is the *āgneyakhaṇḍa* (the region of fire); that which includes the *maṇipūra* and the *anāhata* is the *saurakhaṇḍa* (the region of the sun); and that which includes the *viśuddhi* and the *ājñā* is the *somakhaṇḍa* (the region of the moon). The region above the *svādhiṣṭhāna* is called the *rudragranthi* (the matrix of dissolution); the region above the *anāhata* is the *viṣṇugranthi* (the matrix of preservation); and the region above the *viśuddhi* is the *brahmagranthi* (the matrix of creation).

Flowing through the *idā* is the vital solar force (*sūrya*) and through the *piṅgalā* flows the vital lunar force (*candra*). These vital forces that

constitute life are generated in the lunar region and they are conducted through the *iḍā* and the *piṅgalā* to the *kuṇḍalinī*. Because of the constant flow of the exhilarating nectar of the lunar and solar forces, the *kuṇḍalinī* remains sleeping at the base of the *nāḍīs*, as though drunk. If this flow is choked in the throat plex, lunar, and in the heart plex, solar, the *kuṇḍalinī* will be starved of external stimuli. Thus provoked, the *kuṇḍalinī* will unloosen its *maṇḍala*-like coils and will rise up in the *suṣumṇā*. In its upward ascent it will break through the six synergic centers (the *cakras*) and through the three matrices. In the *sahasrāra* (the crown of the head), the individuated *kuṇḍalinī* establishes its identity with Tripurasundarī, the Universal Creatrice. This will result in the downward descent or flow of the released energy of the *sahasrāra*.

The Self in the individual is an aspect of *Śiva*, whereas the *kuṇḍalinī* is an aspect of Tripurasundarī. Though *Śiva* as the all-transcending Absolute is unaffected by anything, the relative function of an ever-changing universe coexists with *Śiva* through the function of Tripurasundarī. In the case of the individual self, it is not free of the binding influence of *kuṇḍalinī*, which is a fractional aspect of Tripurasundarī. The strangest paradox in this concept is that of the binding and releasing potentials of the *kuṇḍalinī*. When knowledge becomes perverted, as in the case of identifying the body and the senses and the mind with the Self, the triple forces of *jñāna*, *icchā*, and *karma* become binding factors. Wrong identification leads to wrong desires and volitions, and relativistic desires and volitions generate binding *karma*. One *karma* leads to another and, thus, *jñāna*, *icchā*, and *karma* become evil forces. A life bound this way is dependent on the physical body, and thus the immortal Self becomes an imprisoned spark within the meshes of a body. Release from this is *mokṣa* or *mukti*. To turn the mind away from the deluding forces of perverted *jñāna*, *icchā*, and *karma*, the *kuṇḍalinī* should be awakened. When the *kuṇḍalinī* wakes and raises itself in the *suṣumṇā*, the unfoldment of the potential forces in each *cakra* is experienced by the *yogī* as though he were passing through six cities of immaculate ecstasy. In the previous verse, we have seen the arrangement of the *cakras* which proceed from the *mūlādhāra* upward to the *sahasrāra*. In the present verse we are given a description of the flow of the released energy from the *sahasrāra* downward, flushing the six *cakras*, the nine *nāḍī* channels, the three *granthis*, and the 72,000 *nāḍī* points.

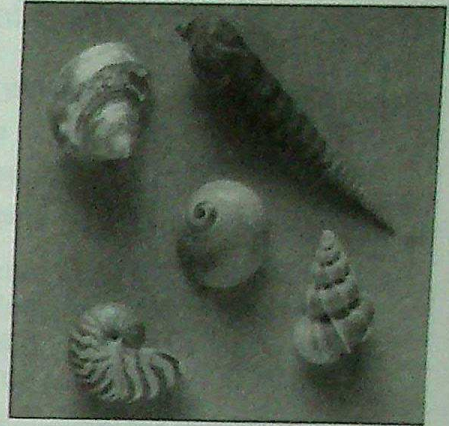


Nāga stones. Carved stone stele, Mysore Palace, India, twentieth century.

The *nāga* (serpent) is, in Indian iconography, commonly associated with fertility. Many women devotees place these carved stones at the base of a sacred tree with the hope of ensuing pregnancy. As a symbol of fecundity, the *nāga* is often part of the Devī's retinue. The serpent is, as well, indicative of the *kuṇḍalinī* energy, a function of *śakti* as it rises through the *cakras* of the human body. The discipline of *kuṇḍalinī* energy leads to the union of dualities and the attainment of wisdom.

Kuṇḍalinī as a general term covers the entire life principle and the psychosomatic structure and function of the individual organism. In its specific sense, it is a dormant force which lies buried at the base of the spinal column. The awakened *kuṇḍalinī* is described by *yogīs* as having no physical status, and it is to be understood as something similar to an electrical force which flashes between the *mūlādhāra* and the *sahasrāra* causing tremendous inner vibrations and luminosity.

This verse is meditated upon with the aid of the *Śrīcakra*. The aspirant has to sit in the lotus pose and, closing the mouth of the alimentary canal, pull the *apāna* upward, generating the *agni* of the fire principle in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*.



Ocean Shells.

The spiraling pattern of these shells refers to the innate mathematical structure with Śakti manifests the universe.

Verse Eleven

चतुर्भिः श्रीकण्ठैः शिवयुवतिभिः पञ्चभिरपि

प्रभिन्नाभिः शंभोर्नवभिरपि मूलप्रकृतिभिः।

चतुश्चत्वारिंशद्वसुदलकलाश्रित्रिवलय-

त्रिरेखाभिः सार्धं तव शरणकोणाः परिणताः॥

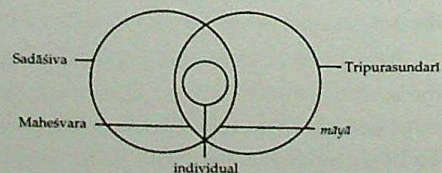
*caturbhiḥ śrīkaṇṭhaiḥ śivayuvatibhiḥ pañcabhirapi
prabhinnābhiḥ śambhornavabhirapi mūlaprakṛtibhiḥ ।
catuṣcatvāriṃśadvasudala kalāśratrivalaya-
trirekhābhiḥ sārḍham tava śaraṇakoṇāḥ pariṇatāḥ ॥*

Four *cakras* pertaining to *Śiva* and also
five *cakras* pertaining to *Śakti*;
apart from those of *Śiva*, make nine
pertaining to the primordial nature.
Counting also eight- and sixteen-petaled phases respectively
enclosed in three circles with six lines:
such make forty-three together your matured abode.



In the earlier verses the microcosmic foundation of the individual organism was schematically equated to the macrocosmic creation. The ground of creation in the macrocosm is *Sadāśiva*, the ever-transcendent, and the creative force is *Tripurasundarī*, the grand harmonizing coordinator of things and events. In the microcosm the place for *Sadāśiva* is taken by *Maheśvara*, the lord of beings, and the place for *Tripurasundarī* is given to *māyā*. *Māyā* has the power to produce vital forces (*pradhāna*); to multiply (*prakṛti*); to veil and segregate the individual from the universal (*avidyā*); to cause right knowledge (*vidyā*); to cause the phenomenal illusion (*aparā*); and to identify with the transcendental (*parā*).

As the limiting and creative aspect of *Tripurasundarī*, *māyā* is referred to in this book as *kuṇḍalinī*. The *kuṇḍalinī* operating in the individual has a nuclear core and a peripheral matrix. It is structured somewhat as shown below. The *kuṇḍalinī* as the core operates negatively like an



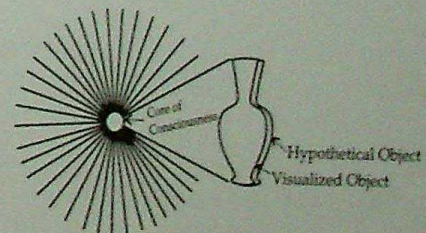
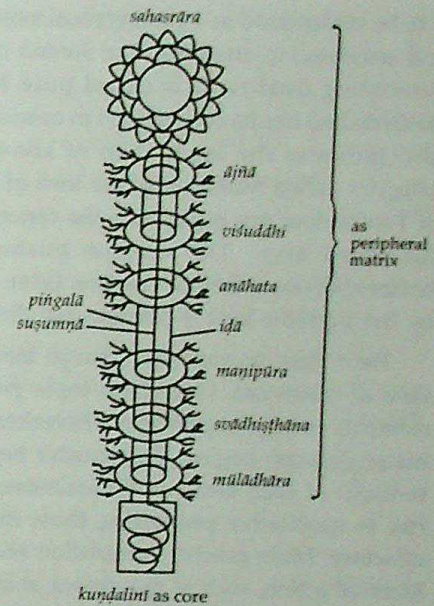
electromagnetic force to activate the periphery, and the periphery in its turn carries out all psychosomatic functions.

Until the final opening and realization is experienced, the *sahasrāra* is used as the link between the macrocosm and the microcosm, between Sadāśiva and Maheśvara, and between Tripurasundarī and *māyā* or *kuṇḍalinī*. All sense data centripetally converges to the center of the *sahasrāra* and is then centrifugally projected or phenomenally created in time and space by *māyā*. This causes an interlacing of several angles.

As there are several million ever-changing beams and vibrations, endless patterns are woven in the *sahasrāra*. When each beam is felt in isolation, it gives a unitary notion of a single object or event or relation. When the multiple formation is experienced all at once, it becomes an orchestra of color and a tapestry of sound. The same area, the *sahasrāra*, is located for meditation of the *Śrīcakra*, which has in it two interlocking sets of four and five triangles. Of these, the group of four pertains to *Śiva* and the five pertain to *Śakti*.

The lunar region in the head symbolically represents the mirroring of all cosmic functions. That is described here as the *Śrīcakra*. The central locus of the *cakra* is marked by a dot called *bindu*. The basic categories that constitute the universe are called the five *śaktikoṇas*. These *śaktikoṇas* are the five elements (*pañcabhūtas*), the five things-in-themselves (*pañcatanmātras*), the five sensations (*pañcājñānendriyas*), the five motions (*pañcakarmendriyas*), and mind (*manas*). The four *śivakoṇas* or angles are the phenomenal illusion (*māyā*), pure knowledge (*śuddhavidyā*), the supreme lord (Maheśvara), and the eternal being (Sadāśiva). These nine categories are said to converge centripetally to the locus, *bindu*, of the *Śrīcakra* and to centrifugally diverge from this point to infinitude. These basic categories are otherwise called the basic wombs (*mūlayonis*). Corresponding to the nine cosmic categories, there are five *Śakti* principles in the human organism: skin, blood, flesh, fat, and bones. The four *Śiva* categories in the body are the marrow, the semen, the vital forces, and the life urge. The tenth womb is the *bindu* origin.

The macrocosmic and microcosmic pairs of nine basic categories give the secret of the theory of genesis according to Tantra. From Sadāśiva to *māyā* there is a reference to four stages of horizontalization in the Absolute. To begin with we are given the concept of Sadāśiva, the eternal being. It



is to be understood as a pure vertical axis which is non-dual, transcendent, and unrelated to anything. The second degree indicates the possibility of generating duality. It is called pure knowledge (*śuddhavidyā*). *Vidyā* (knowledge) has its counterpart in nescience (*avidyā*), and pure knowledge also indicates the application of knowledge. This points to the third category called Maheśvara (the lord of being). In this sense, the genesis of Tantra does not begin with the concept of a god, which comes only at the third step. The creator pushes reality to further level of horizontalization before creation takes place. The stuff of creation used by the supreme lord is phenomenal illusion (*māyā*).

From here onwards we change from the field of the Absolute to the field of relativism. Out of the triple *guṇas* (modalities) of *māyā*, the five elements emerge in principle. Thereafter they are brought to a stage where materialization begins. Basic matter begins with the *tanmātra* (the thing-in-itself) of each element. Quantitative structuring of the *tanmātra* gives rise to qualitative properties; these may be auditory, tactile, visual, or olfactory. More precise formulation and structuring are attributed to five kinds of action, such as movement, manipulation, assimilation, projection, and communication. These correspond to the organs of action, the legs, the hands, the procreative organs, the excretory organs, and the speech organs.

The aspirant who meditates within the *Śrīcakra* thus conceives cosmic genesis as well as individual origination, and relates the scheme of individual life to the encompassing plan of universal life and finds himself placed in a meaningful system.

Verse Twelve

त्वदीयं सौन्दर्यं तुहिनगिरिकन्ये तुलयितुं
कवीन्द्राः कल्पन्ते कथमपि विरिञ्चिप्रभृतयः।
यदालोकौत्सुक्यादमरललना यान्ति मनसा
तपोभिर्दुष्प्रापामपि गिरिशसायुज्यपदवीम्॥

*tvadīyaṁ saundaryaṁ tuhina-giri-kanye tulayitum
kavīndrāḥ kalpante katham-api viriñci-prabhṛtayaḥ ।
yadālokautsukyād amara-lalanā yānti manasā
tapobhirdusprāpām-api girīśasāyujya padavīm ॥*

O Umā, daughter of the snowy Himavān, even great poets like Brahmā and Bṛhaspati cannot adequately describe your beauty, as there is no equal to you. Brahmā and others, with great difficulty attempt to approximate your beauty in their creations. Celestial nymphs, like Rambhā and Urvaśī, engage themselves in the impossible pursuit of achieving union with Śiva by performing hard penance with the singular desire of seeing your beauty, which is only revealed to your divine consort, Śiva.



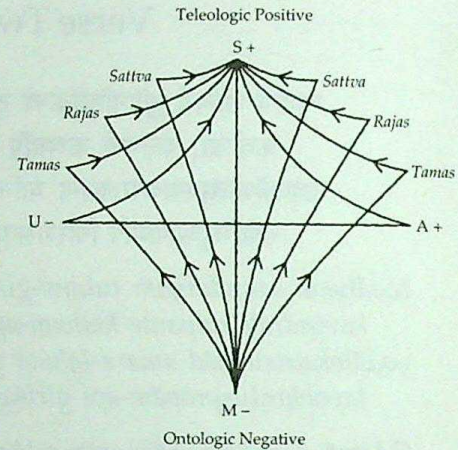
Umā of resplendent beauty, daughter of Himavān, appears in the *Kena Upaniṣad* as the supreme revealer of *Brahman* and teaches Indra (the king of gods), the science of the Absolute (*brahmavidyā*). In the present verse the Mother, Devī, is identified with the same Umā. A clod of earth and a beautiful rose are both matter, except that the latter is more organized than the former. When intelligence, purposiveness, meaning, order, rhythm, and harmony, which are all attributed to the spirit, determine the structuring of molecules or guide the apparent randomness of the waves or particles of matter, then matter articulates the creative or dissolving intention of the spirit. Beauty of the spirit is revealed in the structural design of organized matter. Indian philosophy does not make a dichotomous

division of the stuff of creation into blind matter and omniscient spirit. To explain the genesis of the world culminating in the creation of man, the Sāṃkhya, Vedānta, and Tantra schools of Indian philosophy use a *schema-motor* of phased horizontalization, of a pure and vertically conceived spirit changing into aspects that tend to become more and more gross, until one arrives at a dead end of proliferation into species, properties, and accidents.

In the diagram the vertical axis S-M stands for the pure spirit referred to in this text as *Śiva*. Matter, conceived of in this book as *Śakti*, is an ambivalent function of regression, as well as progression originating from the ontologic negative pole M; it is free to either horizontalize in the order of *sattva-rajās-tamas* (regression) or in the reverse order of *tamas-rajās-sattva* (progression). By regressive horizontalization spirit becomes matter, and by progressive verticalization matter becomes spirit. Both regression and progression have their dual fields of body and mind. The dead end of regression in the body brings it to the limit of morbidity and death, while in the mind regression brings an incapacity to function. Progression is by increased participation in the spirit until individuality merges back in the universal. What is termed above as spirit and matter are *Śiva* and *Śakti* respectively in Tantra.

Sattva, as shown in the diagram, is the transparent power of *Śakti* to mirror truthfully the intelligence, goodness, beauty, rhythm, and harmony of *Śiva*. *Rajās* is the translucent power of *Śakti* to energize, engineer, vivify, duplicate, create, destroy, or dissolve. In essence it is kinetic. *Tamas* is an inertial force by which differently organized units of creation can be segregated to become separate entities, frozen into fixed states, screened from the irrelevant, and veiled or obscured to remain in innate or latent forms.

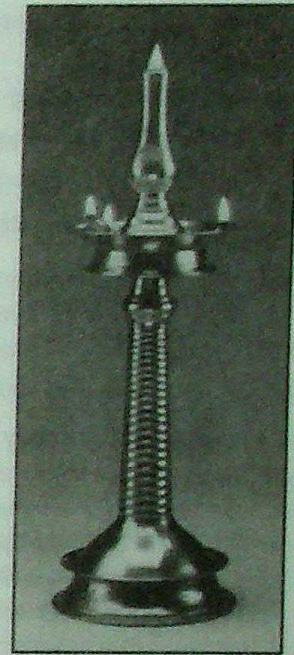
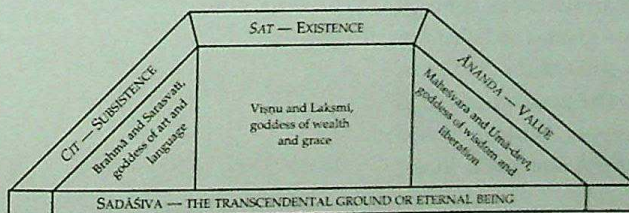
A and U of the horizontal axis stand, respectively, for the active-objective and the active-subjective consciousness, and M of the vertical-negative axis stands for the passive-neutral aspect of the subconscious which is devoid of all dualities. The creation of the world by *Śakti* is an eternal sport (*līlā*), of Devī resulting from her manifold visions of *Śiva*. Kālidāsa, a renowned poet of ancient India, compares the relation of *Śiva* and *Śakti* to that of a lighted lamp and its radiating beams, or to the Word and its meaning.



What thus originates as the universe has two aspects, the cosmological and the psychological. All those factors that are presumably somewhere so as to register their impression on our senses and mind and so enable us to visualize and conceptualize the world of immediate perception are here termed as the cosmologic. Its subjective counterpart is the psychologic, which we experience as the inexhaustible flow of ideas and sensations that come to our mind clothed in a language of words and gestalts.

Hindu mythology abounds in allegories and symbols. While Charles Sherington thinks of ten billion nerve cells operating as an "enchanted loom" to account for consciousness, and Hans Lukas Teuber explains consciousness as "pre-programmed brain cells with enormous specificity of configuration, chemistry and connection," Hindu mythology describes it as *devaloka* (the world of the shining ones), where 36 billion shining monads are actively at work and the chief monad is called Indra. Indra's guru is *Ṛhaspati* who is analogous to Spinoza's thinking substance. While *Brahmā* is in charge of *Śakti*'s overall creation, *Ṛhaspati* guides creative consciousness. Hence *Brahmā* and *Ṛhaspati* are both honored as poets. Beauty of the cosmic order and physical charm come from *Brahmā*, while the charm of word and thought is attributed to *Ṛhaspati*. In celestial nymphs like *Urvaśī* and *Rambhā*, there is an archetypal blend of both the physical and spiritual norms of beauty. The poet here wants to say that even these approximations do not match the beauty of *Umā*, and even these celestial nymphs must undergo hard penance in order to merge into the *Śiva* state to have a glimpse of *Umā*'s unparalleled beauty.

The course of beauty from the divine to the mundane is the unmanifested *Śiva* manifesting as *Umā* of immaculate beauty; *Umā*'s beauty as final cause inspires *Brahmā* to create; *Brahmā*'s poetic elation personifies into *Ṛhaspati*; *Ṛhaspati*, the guru of gods, conceives archetypal beauty; archetypal beauty visualized by the divine poet becomes actualized in the celestial nymphs; celestial nymphs like *Urvaśī* and *Rambhā* inspire human lovers of beauty; and finally human artists and poets create beauty through the media of sound and words, rhymes and rhythms, colors and forms, action and movements.



Traditional brass lamp. India.

Brass lamps that burn oil and come in varying sizes, from six inches high up to four-foot floor ones, were the traditional source of light in Indian temples and homes. The lamp is often seen as symbolic of the nature of Reality.

"Rotating, beginningless, hangs the lamp of the Self, burning as the shadow (of true being), with the oil of latent urges and mental modifications as the wicks."

— Narayana Guru, *Ātmopadeśa Śatakam*

Verse Thirteen

नरं वर्षीयांसं नयनविरसं नर्मसु जडं
तवापाङ्गालोके पतितमनुधावन्ति शतशः।
गलद्वेणीबन्धाः कुचकलशविस्त्रस्तसिचया
हठात् त्रुट्यत्काञ्च्यो विगलितदुकूला युवतयः॥

*naraṁ varṣīyāṁsaṁ nayanaviraśaṁ narmaśu jaḍaṁ
tavāpāṅgāloke patitamanudhāvanti śataśaḥ ।
galadvēṇībandhāḥ kucakalaśavisrastasicayā
haṭhāt trutyatkāñcyo vīgalitadukūlā yuvatayaḥ ॥*

O Gracious Mother, if only a man were to be blessed
by a benign glance from your eyes, no matter how old he is,
nor how austere is his behavior, nor whether he knows
how to evoke conjugal pleasures, even then, after your glance,
young women in the hundreds will excitedly run after him.
In their infatuation they will forget all modesty and
will not notice the locks of their hair unloosening and falling
in disarray and their upper garments gliding away
from their buxom breasts. Neither will they realize how,
by a sudden surge of emotion, their waistbands become
unbuttoned and their silken robes fall off.



This verse is a complement to verse 12. The classical Upaniṣadic visualization of beauty was followed in India by a long, drawn-out deterioration where for twenty centuries man's devotion was to the sensuous. Then came the great breakthrough in the European tradition of post-Goya and post-Van Gogh art, which culminated in the non-representative concept of beauty. In this verse of the seventh century, Śaṅkara gives a redefinition of beauty as the numinous that can shine by itself in spite of the oddity of the object it chooses to illumine. This is in contrast to the usual conception of beauty as sensuous infatuation or as a prelude to erotics. What is chosen here is an old man devoid of the attractions of youthful age, good looks,

light mood, or erotic provocations. While everyone is supposed to be charmed by beautiful women of youthful age clad in silken robes, the young women are here shown forgetting themselves and becoming hysterical at the sight of an uninteresting old man of prosaic mind and austere manners. It is usual to describe man as infatuated by woman's beauty. In the present case, it is women by the hundreds who are infatuated by this old man with neither physical nor mental charm. The only reason given to this strange attraction is the favor shown to him in the form of a benign glance from the Mother. The dynamics are not that of man-woman polarization, rather the cause of attraction is the Mother's grace. It is as if she is causing a whirlpool of beauty around an object of her choice.

Beauty is essentially a subjective experience. The most enchanting panorama can look barren and meaningless, even hostile, to a person when he or she is in a state of depression or frustration. Though science has now shown that pleasure centers of the brain can be stimulated electrically or chemically so beauty can be experienced without the aid of any sense object, that means only that the nerves are being agitated at a deeper level. Beauty in itself is not a mere biomolecular agitation. It is a normative notion of the spirit that interprets the quality of what Hans Lukas Teuber calls the "enormous specificity of configuration, chemistry and connection," no matter whether the configuration is caused by a blond in the theater, an electrical twitch or the spill of an old memory in the brain. When all minds turn to the same sight and exclaim, "Isn't it beautiful?" they are all triggered by the same hand, the hand of mother nature who is variously called Umā or Tripurasundarī and who alone provides all with the mind as well as its sense of beauty. That accounts for the beauty-worshiping young women being ravished by the Mother's spell, which in this verse is cast over the morbid figure of an old recluse.

Here the young women are drawn to the old recluse, the old recluse is drawn to the Mother, and the Mother is drawn to the eternal being, Śiva. In the previous verse the arrow pointed downward from the spiritual to the mundane, and in this it is on the ascent from the mundane to the spiritual.



Māṇḍā, ritual floor drawings, India

Indian wall and floor paintings are art works done exclusively by women who paint free form, using rice paste as their medium. These magical patterns are drawn on a household surface, often the front doorstep, to mark rites of passage, such as birth or marriage. They evoke, in a more domestic and intimate format, the mandalas used in meditation and are intended to bless and empower household members.

Verse Fourteen

क्षितौ षट्पञ्चाशद्विसमधिकपञ्चाशदुदके
 हुताशे द्वाषष्टिश्चतुरधिकपञ्चाशदनिले।
 दिवि द्विःषट्त्रिंशन्मनसि च चतुःषष्टिरिति ये
 मयूखास्तेषामप्युपरि तव पादाम्बुजयुगम्॥

*kṣitau ṣaṭ-pañcāśadvi-samadhika-pañcāśadudake
 hutāṣe dvāṣaṣṭiścaturadhika-pañcāśadanile ।
 divi dviṣaṭtriṁśan manasi ca catuṣṣaṣṭiriti ye
 mayūkhā-steṣāmapyupari tava pādām-bujayugam ॥*

Fifty-six in earth (*mūlādhāra*), fifty-two in water (*maṇipūra*),
 sixty-two in fire (*svādhiṣṭhāna*), fifty-four in air (*anāhata*)
 seventy-two in ether (*viśuddhi*), and sixty-four in mind (*ājñā*).
 These are the rays. Above these are your pair of lotus feet.



The phenomenal world that is created by Brahmā, sustained by Viṣṇu, and reduced to ashes by Rudra is composed of the dust particles gathered from the feet of the Supreme Mother. The anthropomorphic concept of the Creator is given up in this verse in preference to a psychocosmic structure and its corresponding function. The individual aspirant can only proceed from where he or she is located, emotionally and physically, at a given point in time and space. So the description of the grandeur and beauty of the Mother of all beings commences from the base foundation of the psychosomatic system of the person, described here as the earth principle. The quality of earth is smell and that is the most peripheral aesthetic appreciation. For lower animals in search of their prey, smell is very important. The most gross aspect of world manifestation is to be seen in the actual interplay of physical particles directed in accordance with the precise laws of chemistry. This, according to the Tantric concept, is the conjunction of *Śiva* and *Śakti* at the most exterior level as the inseparable twain, the dynamic and its principle. The last four letters of the Sanskrit alphabet, *va*, *śa*, *ṣa*, and *sa*, are attributed to this region as the mystical

syllables for the creation of its word power. Out of 360 days, this region is allotted a time span of fifty-six days, equally divided between *Śiva* and *Śakti*, with twenty-eight days each.

The next immediate element in the ascending hierarchy of creation is water, which has the quality of taste. This in its turn implies nourishment, as the origin and nurturing of life are in water. The synergic center symbolizing water is the *maṇipūra* (pearl) of perfection. In the order of the description of the *cakras*, there is a discrepancy between Śaṅkara's scheme and the traditional yogic scheme. Here the *maṇipūra* is located in the navel plex, which, in the scheme of the *yogīs*, is the third *cakra* from the bottom. Śaṅkara treats it as the second. Fifty-two days are attributed to the *maṇipūra*, which are shared by *Śiva* and *Śakti* with twenty-six days each. The Sanskrit letters assigned for word power in this region are *ba*, *bha*, *ma*, *ya*, *ra*, and *la*.

From the water principle one ascends into the principle of fire, *svādhiṣṭhāna*. In the scheme of meditation presented in this verse of Śaṅkara, one ascends from the *mūlādhāra* base at the end of the spine to *maṇipūra*, the navel plex, and then descends to *svādhiṣṭhāna*, placed at the genitals, in-between the *mūlādhāra* and the *maṇipūra*. In the actual practice for the activation of the center, this is found to be very helpful because the navel plex is to be co-stimulated along with the synergic center at the genital base. *Svādhiṣṭhāna* is the ground of the psyche. In the libidinal scheme the psyche is the most hypersensitive faculty that controls both the physical and mental activities of the individual. All of an individual's locked up urges are in this region. Both hope and anxiety are generated in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. Thus it is the breeding ground of all motivation. The flames of desire rise from this region and the conceptual visualization of desires is promoted, both as *saṅkalpa* (desirable motives to be actualized) and *vikalpa* (hallucinative imaginations that tend to become pathological). This region is given a total of sixty-two days, of which fifty are assigned to the basic sound principles involved in the creation by word. Four are given to the repetition of *aum*, which is mystically implied in the *mantra haṁsa* that is unconsciously manifesting in respiration. The letters of the alphabet attributed to this region for psychodynamic function are *ḍa*, *ḍha*, *ṇa*, *ta*, *tha*, *da*, *dha*, *na*, *pa*, and *pha*. *Svādhiṣṭhāna* and *mūlādhāra* are bracketed in the region of the principle of fire (*agni tattva*).



Flame of Wisdom. Painted wood carving, Tibet, twentieth century.

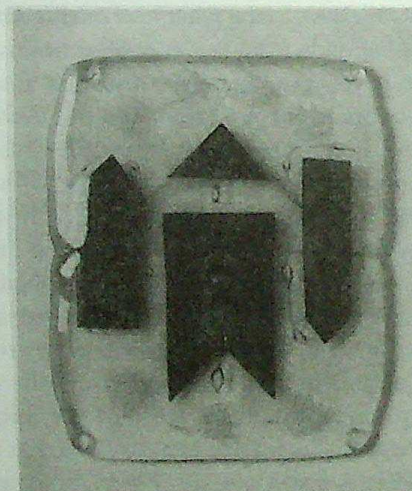
In the iconography of Greater India (peninsular India as well as the adjoining areas to the north, south and south-east that were in the same cultural orbit), fire is an image that vibrates with many complementary meanings. It is fire that destroys: the ego, our illusions, the world of physical form. It is fire that purifies and levels the ground so new life can appear. And it is the fire of wisdom that fills the enlightened mind.

The next element in ascendance is air and its corresponding synergic center is the *anāhata*. This region is located in the heart plex and implies touch. Love and companionship, which hold the entire world together, are placed at the center of the scheme, just as beauty is centralized in the tree of life of the *Kabbāla*. *Anāhata* is the unbroken: this also implies the interconnectedness of everything that goes into the manifestation of both the physical and the spiritual world. Between the physical and the spiritual there is no break or chasm, and in the evolutionary chain of manifestation there is also a single unbroken flow of life.

Ya, ra, la, and *va* are the mystical syllables meditated upon here. They suggest the localizing of interest, positive enjoyment, merger with the state of happiness (both in physical identity and spiritual atonement), and then losing oneself in a state of wonder. The Sanskrit letters assigned for word dynamics are *ka, kha, ga, gha, ṇa, ca, cha, ja, jha, ṇa, ṭa, ṭha*. The *manipūra* and the *anāhata* are bracketed as the region ruled by the sun.

Above this center is the throat plex (*viśuddhi*). It is the region of the ether (*ākāśa*), where the most primary vibrations of sound manifest. In the perceptual world, sound is the most effective communicator and its memory potential is the deepest. Unlike the other four elements of earth, water, fire, and air, *ākāśa* has no physical substance. Thus it provides the link between the physical and the spiritual. In space travel, to go from the orbit of the earth into the orbit of the moon a change-over period or process is necessary. Like that, to enter from the region of the spirit into the region of the physical world, a certain kind of transformation or transmutation has to take place. To clothe an idea in oral language that can be uttered with phonetics and thus transmitted to another's mind by depositing the elements of speech into another's hearing system is a very intriguing process. Words change into meaning with the sounds of the words being the carriers of deeply affective messages of knowledge. This marks the most central or pivotal point of the physical becoming articulated or of spirit animating the physical.

Meditation in the *viśuddhi* (the throat plex) is done with the mystical syllables *aiṁ* and *hrīṁ*. The fourteen vowels of the Sanskrit language are *a, ā, i, ī, u, ū, ṛ, ṝ, ḷ, e, ai, o, au, am*. The seventy-two days allotted to this center are mainly for word structuring. Vowels are imperative for linking consonants and making words. If consonants are like colors, the



The Goddess. Bob Lucas, fused glass and copper sheeting, America, 1989.

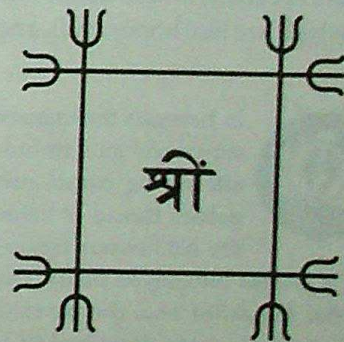
The recognizable heart of the goddess lies at the center of her abstract body, with a triangular head and north-south directional arms. Walking in a circle around the body are the goddess' tulip footprints.

vowel is like the artist's medium to relate one color to another. Such pigmentation is common for painting and music. In both, the color element is called *varṇa*. Vowels are called *svara*, which means that which suits one's own pleasure. The number of word units that can be structured by combining two consonants with a vowel is so amazingly large that only a few such possibilities are given, even in the most voluminous dictionary of any language.

When we pass to the *ājñā*, we transcend the physical and come to the overseeing mind which is in charge of our wakeful and dream consciousness. The fourteen vowels used for word dynamics in oral expression are used also for structuring reason. We think with words and the interconnection between the *ājñā* and the *viśuddhi* is so close that some people cannot think without physically expressing their thoughts. Thinking is a kind of talking within one's mind. As talking is done with the tongue, the organ of speech, ideas are relayed in the form of commands to organs of action. Thus, the incoming sensory affectivity (the afferents) is responded to with actions generated through the motor system. The order of the intensification of action is from the mouth to hands, to feet, to excretory organs and to the genitals. All these are presided over by the moon which is suggestive of the quality of reflection or mirroring that is happening in the mind. The presentative and the representative experiences are so intensely intermingled that one cannot say which is actual and which is projected. Both in the actualization of a gestalt and the affective response given to it, a highly complicated and instantaneous function is required.

This ascending hierarchy ultimately takes one to the source of all creation which is none other than the particles of dust located between the two feet of the Supreme Mother. The radiation of the beams from that center is to be understood both as a dazzling light as well as a flaming sound, which on one side shines forth as the cosmos and, on the other, as the psychosomatic function within the finite organism of each sentient being. Such is the grand scheme of beauty that is depicted in this verse.

The *yantra* given here is to be meditated upon with the *mantra śrīṇi*.



śrīṇi

Verse Fifteen

शरज्ज्योत्स्नाशुभ्रां शशियुतजटाजूटमकुटां
वरत्रासत्राणस्फटिकघटिकापुस्तककराम्।
सकृन् त्वा नत्वा कथमिव सतां सनिदधते।
मधुक्षीरद्राक्षामधुरिमाधुरीणा फणितयः॥

*śaraj jyotsnā śubhrāṁ śaśiyuta jaṭā jūṭa makuṭāṁ
vara trāsa trāṇa sphaṭika ghaṭikā pustaka karām ।
sakṛn na tvā natvā katham iva satāṁ saninidadhate
madhukṣīra-drākṣā-madhurimā dhurīṇā phaṇitayaḥ ॥*

Your bright light being the sheen of the autumnal moon,
the topknot of your hair is decorated with the lunar crescent.
Your hands show the gestures of *varadam* (boon-giving blessings)
and *trāṇanam* (assurance or refuge). In one hand you hold
sphaṭika ghaṭika (rosary of crystal beads) and in the other *pustaka*
(a book). If you are even worshiped by good people,
how can they miss coming into your presence and enjoying
the nectarine sweetness of the melody of your words,
which are like honey, milk and grapes?

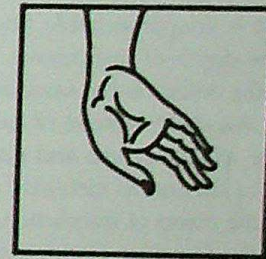
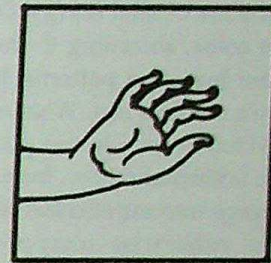


In between the immanent unconscious and the transcendent superconscious realms of the spirit, humankind lives in the alternating consciousness of transactions and dreams. The golden thread of value or interest that remains unbroken in the continuous figure-of-eight movement of the witnessing self is *ānanda* (unalloyed bliss). The microscopic creativity presided over by the *kuṇḍalinī* and the macrocosmic creativity presided over by *Tripurasundarī* are described in verse 14 as counterparts of the same scheme. Both are aspects of the archetypal Mother. Like the four limbs of *Brahman* given in the *Māṇḍūkya Upaniṣad*, the archetypal Mother also has four aspects, *Kālī*, *Durgā*, *Sarasvatī*, and *Lakṣmī*. Structurally *Kālī* and *Durgā* represent, respectively, the vertical minus and vertical plus poles. Such aspects can also be termed the alpha and the omega. Similarly,

Sarasvatī and Lakṣmī respectively mark the minus and plus poles of the horizontal axis. Such fourfold divisions do not in any way destroy the unity of the archetypal Mother. Without being identified as belonging to anyone of the four poles, she can fill both the vertical and the horizontal. The function of Tripurasundarī and the *kuṇḍalinī* can be correctly understood only when the verticality of creation implied in both aspects is placed in one and the same scheme. This gives us the secret of humans functioning on earth as co-creators with the supreme manifestor of the world. When the sun and moon illuminate the panorama of the world, the colorful beauty of such vistas is registered in the eyes of people. God creates the world and men and women comprehend its representative value. Thus, if God is the poet, man is his critic. The beauty that is generated by God is seen, appreciated and lived by humankind.

In the *Saundaryalaharī*, God is not a masculine “he” but a “She” with a capital S. The structural implications of the grand Creatrice cannot be fully visualized unless the seeker shares with her the same purpose and function. It is to initiate the meditator into the secret of the Supreme Mother’s purpose and function that her fourfold representations are here given as Kālī and Durgā, Sarasvatī, and Lakṣmī. The meditation should begin by placing oneself at the alpha point of vertical ascent. This is like sitting in pitch darkness where there is nothing to guide one other than an unknown hand offering refuge. That hand quells our fear. In absolute faith and total trust, we surrender and give ourselves over to follow the ascending steps within the matrix of immanence. We remain steeped in the deep sleep state of the psyche in which the unconscious is guarding the secret of both life and death. Each day a little is released from the unconscious and promoted to conscious manifestation, either as the subjective visualization of dreams or as the transactional conversion into a conscious experiential entity that can thereafter be added to the storage of memory. This is the causal aspect of the continuing individuation of the psyche.

The highly secretive mechanism of manifestation can be made a little clearer with an example from nature. The flowering plants in our gardens stand there as if drawn in a picture, but in their secret silence a conspiracy is going on between the descending rays of the sun and the ascending moisture from earth. The salts and minerals from the earth are diluted with water and rise as sap up to the leaves where they are wedded into new configurations



Mudrās. Specific hand configurations are used in traditional Indian art and dance to designate certain states of awareness, most commonly blessings and refuge.

through the use of solar energy. Out of that union, new leaves are unfurled and there come, according to the characteristics of each species, flowers of different hues and patterns. If we look at the earthly source of these flowers, we see only dirt. What emerges from that dirt is of incomparable beauty. What is seen in the plant is to be interpolated into one's own system to understand how, from the immanence of the dark unconscious, there emerge into experiential minds intuitional ideas that can transport us to the otherwise unapproachable, inaccessible realms of the transcendental.

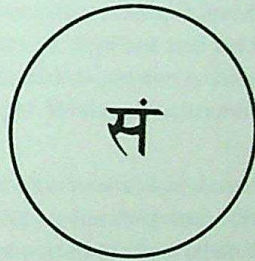
Durgā is unapproachable. She marks the height of transcendence and Kālī is the depth of immanence. The flight of steps that leads from the alpha to the omega is the same as that implied between the cause and its effect. In this daily exercise of ascendance, we pass through the phenomenal stage where dreams and transactions are enacted. It is here that the actuality of life and its virtuality stand face-to-face as the subject of reflection and the object of transaction. In the subject of reflection, the Creatrice becomes the Supreme Goddess of aesthetics. She acts as the inspirer and promotes the actualization of the vertical *ānanda* in myriad patterns of horizontally manifesting names and forms. This secret is given in the previous verse in which six sources of the upsurge of creative energy are located and the symbols of word dynamics are given through the allotment of various *mantras*. When what is received by the artist or the poet, or any creator for that matter, by way of inspiration from Sarasvatī, is actualized in the here and now that glorifies Lakṣmī, the goddess of beauty, grace and prosperity. Like the dream and the wakeful, this phenomenon is bound to be transient. Like the flowing water of a fountain going back to its own source, what is actualized in the here and now returns to the alpha unless, with the supreme effort of a *tapasyā* (sublimation), the essence of the experience is verticalized and one ascends in the sublimity of transcendence.

A synthetic picture of the fourfold aspects of the Creatrice is given in the present verse in which the characteristics of all the four aspects of the archetypal mother are fused into one. The backdrop is the autumnal moonshine which is suggestive of Lakṣmī's aesthetic affinity. In the bringing together of the matted hair and the crescent moon, we can see the fusion of Kālī and Durgā. The gesture which gives assurance of fearlessness is of Durgā and that granting

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refuge is of Kālī. The rosary for meditation and the book of wisdom come from Sarasvatī. To participate in the supreme glory is suggested by the sweetness of honey, milk, and grapes. These triple values are also three eternal gifts attributable to the divine female. Mother is the first teacher of wisdom. In her lips resides the honey of speech. In her breast is the milk of sustenance. In her genitals are the erotic flames of love's wine. Beings are born of her erotics, sustained by her nourishing milk, and led by her wisdom. Such is the grand scheme of meditation given for one who wants to be initiated into the secret of the highest beauty of both the immanent and the transcendent.

The following *yantra* is given for meditation with this verse, with the accompanying *mantra* of *sam*. Here the Devī is said to be in the form of *kriyāśakti* (the source of poetic talents).



sam

Verse Sixteen

कवीन्द्राणां चेतःकमलवनबालातपरुचिं
भजन्ते ये सन्तः कतिचिदरुणामेव भवतीम्।
विरिञ्चिप्रेयस्यास्तरुणतरशृङ्गारलहरी-
गभीराभिर्वाग्भिर्विदधति सतां रञ्जनममी॥

*kavīndrāṇāṃ cetaḥ kamalavanabālātaparuciṃ
bhajante ye santaḥ kati cidaruṇāmeva bhavatīm ।
viriñci preyasystarunātara śṛṅgāralaharī-
gabhirābhirvāgbhir vidadhati satāṃ rañjanamamī ॥*

O Mother, addressed by the wise as Aruṇā (magenta) itself,
your resplendence gladdens the hearts of master poets,
which are like clusters of lotus flowers
bathed in the morning glory of the rising sun.
Those wise ones are lucky to listen to the musical melody
of the Creator's spouse, Sarasvatī,
which is replete with sweet and dignified words of love,
and when they compose poems of exquisite beauty,
they are met with the hearty appreciation of
the connoisseurs of poetry.



The first act of creation begins with a stir in the Self, by which the Self is mirrored in itself as the image of the Self. Out of the formless there arises form. A pebble thrown on the surface of a lake does not stop with a single pulse. Rings of ripples go on receding from the center and soon the lake is patterned with several circles. The Self is never satisfied with the casting of a single image. When images proliferate, the monotony of repetition gives way to atypical formations of unique forms adhering to a universal law. Thus the very first stir has in it the beginning of poetry. The Self is the first of all poets and the phenomenal world is the unending poem imagined by countless minds, sung in endless ways, painted and sculpted unceasingly.

The Mother of all beings is also the Mother of all forms, all names and all mediums of expression. She is like a subterranean river, which in Indian mythology is called Sarasvatī. In a previous verse we spoke of the four archetypal versions of the Supreme Mother: Kālī, at the vertical negative, Durgā at the vertical plus, Sarasvatī at the horizontal minus, and Lakṣmī at the horizontal plus. In the purest, formless form, she is pure light. The first stir comes by the casting of a shadow. By that, *aditi* (the unbroken) becomes directed into plus and minus, light and darkness.

In Genesis of the Old Testament, creation begins with light, and light becoming separated from darkness. That darkness is the abysmal depth from which every item of creation has to emerge. Emergence is formal. There is nothing more mysterious than a form, the sheer outline of things. The non-dimensional reality emerges into a two-dimensional reality. Primeval form needs no color, no shade, no mass. The sun can be represented on a small bit of paper by drawing a plain circle. A simple line drawing of an ant can be blown up to a size bigger than an elephant and yet the recognition of the form is instantaneous. The line of demarcation is the scantiest manipulation of non-light in the all-filling light. When once a boundary is drawn, a specific form is fixed forever.

Imagery conditions consciousness, and conditioning is made intense when it colors the vision. Color creates deep emotional agitation. Hence it is called *rāgam*. The intensely colored state arises when the color is purple or red. If the deepest of blue is at the alpha, scarlet red is at the omega. Kālī is therefore described as black or intensely blue, and Durgā is scarlet red. We have seen that these respectively mark the alpha and the omega. For the creation of form, the purity of light is to be retained. Therefore Sarasvatī at the horizontal minus is conceived to be transparent like a crystal. She is clad in a white raiment. Her positive counterpart is Lakṣmī who is resplendent like a rainbow. Any, or every, color will suit her. Now we have a complete scheme of colors and the archetypal mothers who represent those colors. We are still in the world of forms.

No stir happens without causing a vibration. *Ākāśa*, identical with the Absolute, is deeply silent unless it is stirred. When it is stirred, vibration emerges as sound (*nāda*). When sound becomes musical, or affective voice, specific pitches are bracketed as a note, a phrase, a composition. That, too, colors consciousness. It is as if the sound has a color. Hence, in Indian music the two major affective musical modes are *varṇa* and *rāga*. The two breasts of Mother Sarasvatī are considered to be the generating sources of the aural and



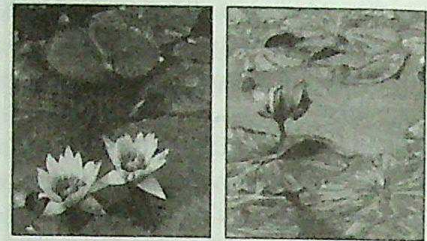
Sarasvatī, goddess of wisdom. Carved ivory, India, twentieth century.

Sarasvatī is the manifestation of the Devi who is accepted as the all-pervasive effulgence of knowledge which is at once creative and eternal. Sarasvatī by herself is colorless. But like a prism which gives rise to a spectrum, she mysteriously causes a colorful world of names and forms. Her mist-like veil is fabricated with time and space. In her hands she holds a palm-leaf book, a rosary of letters, a veena and a pen. These represent, respectively, the word of wisdom, the thread of meaning in language, the intuitive melody of music, and the inspired art of poetry.

visual expressions of aesthetics. She is the wielder of name and form. It is from the creator that the mediums of both name and form come. The creator is Brahmā and the medium for creation is Sarasvatī. For this reason, Sarasvatī is metaphorically described as the daughter of Brahmā. The Creator cannot create without impregnating the name and form again and again. On that ground, Sarasvatī is the spouse of Brahmā.

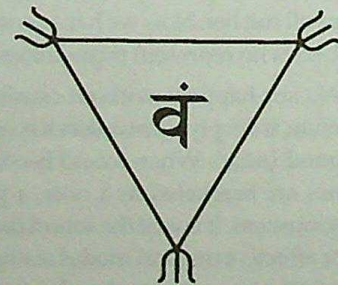
The relation between the archetypal Mother, simply described as Devī, and the four specific forms, should be clearly held in mind. These are secondary types mirrored in phenomenal consciousness as the four basic images; they can be treated as the four primary images. The first poet is Brahmā the creator. His fourfold creations are Mahākālī, Mahāsarasvatī, Mahādurgā, and Mahālakṣmī. The interaction between Mahākālī and Mahādurgā is to be seen in the vertical parameter of the light and sound of creation. This is quite a demonstrable fact. Draw a thick line in black pigment. Stand at a distance and look at it through the side of a prism. You can visualize the magical transformation of the black pigment into a fascinating magenta color. The entire spectrum is there culminating in red. Mysteriously, the black pigment disappears. Keeping all these secrets at heart, we can dive deep into the creative depth of poetry or visual art. If the starting point is from the archetypal poet Brahmā, the initial stimulation for him comes from the magenta of the Devī. At a more pronounced formal and melodic level, we meet with the subterranean flow of poetic, artistic, and musical inspiration coming from Sarasvatī.

The great poets find themselves positioned in the center of the vertico-horizontal correlation. They know the source of beauty and recognize it as magenta. They wait for the grace of the Mother to be showered on them from the celestial *vīṇā* of Sarasvatī. These wise ones are like lotuses in a pond, kissed by the morning sun. Their aesthetically colored minds become further enhanced by the graceful beams of the Divine. The lotus unites with the embracing sun, and in exaltation the lotuses sing their ecstatic songs of love. Those songs in turn become like the sun's rays. The flowers in the minds of connoisseurs are waiting to be touched by such immaculate rays of beauty — the beauty of poetry, the beauty of art, and the beauty of love. The outer ripples reach the shore of the lake. Pure *ānanda* (unalloyed bliss) which is the very nature of the Supreme, is brought forth in words, tones, colors, shapes, pitches, and timbers for every eye to see and ear to hear. Such is the sharing of the Creatrice with all creatures. The *mantra vāṁ* is meditated within the *yantra* given here.



Water lily or lotus.

In the Indian mythological landscape, the lotus flower symbolizes the purity of Being that rises up out of the watery, worldly mud by which it is nourished but never blemished. Floating on the water's surface, the lotus flower opens expansively to the sun and the light of knowledge.



vāṁ

Verse Seventeen

सवित्रीभिर्वाचां शशिमणिशिलाभङ्गरुचिभि-
र्वशिन्याद्याभिस्त्वां सह जननि संचिन्तयति यः।
स कर्ता काव्यानां भवति महतां भङ्गिरुचिभि-
र्वचोभिर्वाग्देवीवदनकमलामोदमधुरैः॥

*savitribhirvācāṁ śaśimaṇiśilābhaṅgarucibhir-
vaśinyādyābhistvāṁ saha janani sañcintayati yaḥ ।
sa kartā kāvyānāṁ bhavati mahatāṁ bhaṅgirucibhir-
vacobhirvāgdevī-vadanakamalā-moḍamadhuraiḥ ॥*

O Mother, those who meditate on you, along with *sāvitṛīs* (generators of words) and goddesses like *Vaśinī*, resplendent like the shimmering pieces of broken moonstone, become authors of books which are as inspired as those of great poets, having their words impressed with the fragrance of the face of beauty of the goddess of the Word, *Sarasvatī*.



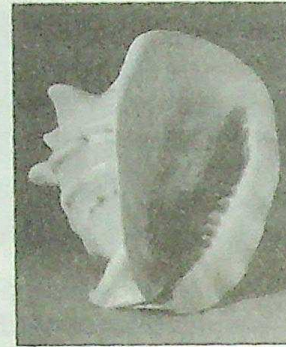
Silence is characteristic of aloneness. Speech characterizes companionship. Where there is an "other" to relate to, the idea of "I am" becomes pronounced. In Sanskrit I-consciousness is termed as *aham*. The other is called *idam*. Transaction is mostly between the "I" and the "other." The word *aham* is constituted of the first letter of the Sanskrit alphabet, *a*, and the last one, *ha*. Both these letters are articulated with the mouth open. *A* is a vowel. *Ha* is a consonant and vowel put together in such a way that the vowel is more emphasized than the consonant. All possible communication happens between the first and the last letters of the alphabet. They are bracketed and closed into a single unit by adding the last of the vowel, *am*. Thus "I" becomes *aham*. To know the exact nature of *a* and *ha*, they should be articulated. *A* is activated or generated in the mouth. To say *ha*, a thrust of energy has to come from the heart to the mouth. *A* is soft; *ha* is more pronounced. For that reason, *a* is called the

Śiva letter, *śivākṣara* or *śivaśabda*. *Ha* is called the Śakti letter, *śaktiākṣara* or *śaktiśabda*. Thus at the very core of one's life the father and mother of the world preside. When a person says *aham* (I) homage is unknowingly paid to the progenitors of the Self. As soon as a child leaves the mother's womb and enters the world, communication begins with a loud primal scream. The arrival of the newborn is announced in the only language that is known to the baby. Even in the very first scream both *a* and *ha* are implied.

The primary cell that is formed in the uterus and that becomes a fetus has in it both the sperm and the ovum. This is the same as the conjunction of Śiva and Śakti. It is the central nucleus from which both the body and mind of a person evolve, develop, and perfect into adulthood. That nucleus is the locus or central point of a whole world of events that take place in the time-space continuum. When that entire world is circled and treated as a region, it is a *maṇḍala*. From the central nucleus (*bindu*) to the outermost periphery, the movement that flows backward and forward, centrifugally and centripetally, is *nāda* (the primary vibration of energy). The multitudinous patterns formed in this region or *maṇḍala* are interconnected, are imbued with a sense of value, and are called *kalā* (the art of life).

From the very first day, the very first hour of the child's birth, mother nature assumes the role of a teacher and begins programming the baby. Meticulous training is given by mother nature for the child to become fully familiarized with all vowels. It takes some time to be initiated into consonants, yet when once the child is free to manipulate the direction of the vital breath with its tongue so as to pronounce the consonants, it starts picking up words. Long before a word is practiced, the object to which a name is given is watched and a latent power to articulate the name is developed. Here, we arrive at the primary sculpting of words. A word has a phonetic impact. On hearing it, the sound bursts into meaning in the listener's mind. This bursting of sound into a definite, specific meaning is called *sphoṭa*. Sarasvatī (the goddess of language) is described as *sphoṭa darśana kalā kutūhala* or one who is gladdened with the creative art of putting meaning into the aggregate of phonetics.

Eight goddesses are conceived of as sharing this word-generating function. They are Vāsinī, Kāmeśvarī, Modinī, Vimalā, Aruṇā, Jayinī, Sarveśvarī, Kaulinī. All the sixteen vowels are dealt with by Vāsinī. The five consonants beginning with *ka* are allotted to Kāmeśvarī. The five consonants beginning with *ca*



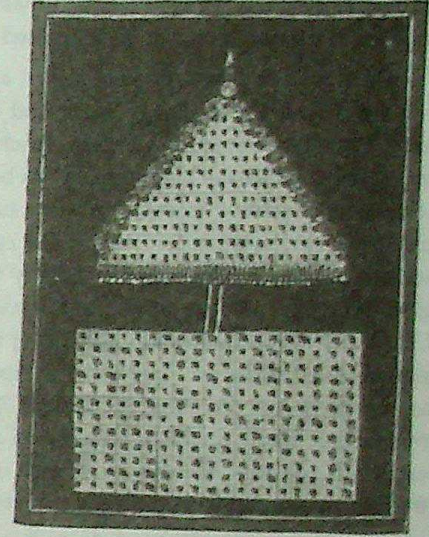
Conch Shell.

The conch shell, whose sinuous shape is suggestive of the yoni of the goddess, is the instrument blown on to summon disciples to prayer. The sound of the goddess serves to awaken the inner ear of understanding in her devotees.

are allotted to Modinī. The five consonants beginning with *ṭa* are allotted to Vimalā. The five consonants beginning with *ta* are allotted to Aruṇā. The five consonants beginning with *pa* are allotted to Jayinī; *ya* and *śa* are allotted to Sarveśvarī. And *ṣa*, *sa*, *ha*, *ḷa*, and *kṣa* are allotted to Kaulinī. Now we have all the letters, both the vowels and consonants, pressed into service. *La* and *ḷa* combined with *ha*; *kṣa* is *ka* combined with *sa* and *ha*.

Although metaphorically we speak of eight goddesses of language structuring all words, this is to be understood as a poetic expression. The actual propitiation of the goddesses is attained through a thoroughgoing study of language in which grammar and logic are brought into full play. Grammar deals with syntax and logic with the correct indication of truth. The meaning of the spoken word goes beyond what is heard. Thus, it has a transcendental purport. The affective quality of the sound, which also enhances the meaning apart from its unique power to reveal, is the musicality of the sound. Its emphasis is on aesthetics. So in the psychodynamics of a word, there is a transcendental and an aesthetic aspect.

The aesthetics are governed by sixteen goddesses of knowledge: Mahā Tripurasundarī and Kāmeśvarī (these two are directly connected with Vaśinī); Bhagamālīnī and Nityaklīnā (directly connected with Kāmeśvarī); Bheruṇḍī and Vahnivāsinī (directly connected with Modinī); Mahāvīdyeśvarī and Śivadūti (directly connected with Vimalā); Tvaritā and Kulasundarī (directly connected with Aruṇā); Nityā and Nilapatākā (directly connected with Jayinī); Vijayā and Sarvamaṅgalā (directly connected with Sarveśvarī); and Jvālāmālīnī and Citrā (directly connected with Kaulinī). The exoterics of these terms conform to the right requirements of a language. For instance, the vowels governed by Vaśinī are necessary to infuse phonetic energy into sounds. The consonants can be written but cannot be spoken unless a vowel is added. *K* plus *a* becomes *ka*; *k* plus *i* becomes *ki*; *k* plus *u* becomes *ku*. Vaśinī implies the tonal affinity between sounds. If you examine a lexicon of any language, you can see that certain sounds are never put together to make a word. In another language the same pattern can also be seen. There is an inner law which regulates the conjunctions of consonants and of consonants conjoined with vowels. In other words, Vaśinī is not any person but the principle of conjoining sounds. The need for communication arises from the desire to acquire something or to accomplish something. This inner need of language is beautifully brought out in the name, Kāmeśvarī, the goddess of desire. When the right word is rightly spoken, it gladdens the heart of the speaker and the



A sacred umbrella. Ink on paper, Rajasthan, India, nineteenth century.

This umbrella is formed out of the Sanskrit alphabet, whose sounds are the dwelling place of the goddess.

listener. Choosing the right sound to make speech sweet is attributed to the goddess Modinī, which can be translated as "the joyous."

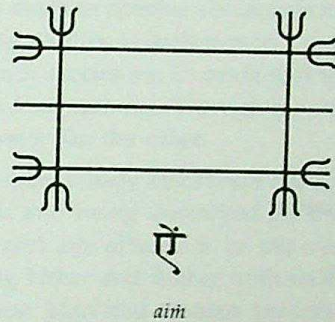
Slang and obscenity are considered a bane in any language, and there is a need to keep language pure and lucid. The governorship of that function is attributed to Vimalā, which means that which is absolutely pure. To be effective, language has to be affective. The dawn heralds the coming of the sun. Similarly, a word has to be suggestive of the greater intention of the speaker, which for reasons of modesty, culture, and sophistication, has to remain slightly veiled. This very difficult role is given to Aruṇā, the magenta color of morning. Words are to be pregnant. One word should automatically bring the next word to go with it. That role is given to Jayinī. Jayinī is the copulating power of sounds. Sounds are coupled and a new word is born. This world is ruled by words. The overruling word power is attributed to Sarveśvarī, who stands as the supreme goddess. Finally, as speech should have a conclusive impact, there comes Kaulinī who puts a full stop to every sentence.

The eight *sāvitṛīs* are only indicated here. Similarly, every name suggested in this *maṇḍala* carries with it a profound semantic and psychological import. The outer periphery of the *maṇḍala* is guarded by *yoginīs*. They are: Vidyā and Recaka (connected with Vaśinī); Mocika (connected with Kāmeśvarī); Amṛtā (connected with Modinī); Dīpikā and Jñānā (connected with Vimalā); Āpyā (connected with Aruṇā); Vyāpinī and Medhā (connected with Jayinī); Vyomā and Siddhā (connected with Sarveśvarī); and Lakṣmī (connected with Kaulinī). In this verse we are given a cryptic summarization of the science and art of communication.

A thing is presented to our senses to form a representative image of perception. With our physical eye we look at the presented, and the representative image is perceived by the mental eye. At a still deeper level, the pre-established concept connects itself with the percept for the purpose of identification. The whole function is illuminated by the self-luminous spirit. With perception or seeing there are four hierarchical stages and in language, too, there are four hierarchical stages: the articulated sound, the recognition of a structured word, the comprehension of its meaning, and the homogeneity of the spirit through which communication is made possible. These four are, respectively, called *vaikhari*, *madhyamā*, *paśyanti*, and *parā*. They are the most concrete, the perceptually concrete, the subtle, and the most subtle.

Thus, in language, the universal that is enshrined in every mind is the longing for union. When the *aham* (I-consciousness), which is the same in two persons, desires union, lovers can express it through a fond embrace and a loveful kiss. Language is performing the same function.

For meditation the relations of the goddesses are used, as well as the following *yantra* with the *mantra aim*.



Verse Eighteen

तनुच्छायाभिस्ते तरुणतरणिश्रीसरणिभि-

र्दिवं सर्वामुर्वीमरुणिमनिमग्रां स्मरति यः।

भवन्त्यस्य त्रस्यद्वनहरिणशालीननयनाः

सहोर्वश्या वश्याः कति कति न गीर्वाणगणिकाः॥

*tanucchāyābhiste taruṇatarāṇi-śrī-saraṇibhir-
divaṁ sarvām-urvīm-aruṇimananimagnāṁ smarati yaḥ ।
bhavantyaśya trasyadvana-hariṇa-śālīnanayanāḥ
sahorvaśyā vaśyāḥ kati kati na gīrvāṇagaṇikāḥ ॥*

The radiant beauty of your delicate body submerging the sky,
and the whole world bathed in the sheer magenta glory of dawn:
he who is able to contemplate thus wins over maids
with startled, gentle, wild deer eyes, together with Urvaśī
and how many, many other such celestial damsels!



The union of heaven and earth is universally seen in the embrace of the earth by the sun or the moon. The earth is the alpha, the denominator factor, and the sun is the omega or numerator factor. In the vertical axis that marks the parameter of these two extreme poles, there are the descending rays from heaven in the form of light, responded to by the generation of life on earth. The sun is sometimes looked upon as the awakener of the earth going from east to west and bringing the radiant magenta of dawn. On seeing the first blush of the orient skies, birds begin to sing, flowers open, bees come up out of their hives, and all living beings wake to the day's program. To wake from sleep means to open one's eyes. This opening of the eyes is symbolic: from inertial darkness the soul is emerging into illuminated action. Just as the sun fills the entire sky and the earth with the morning light, the soul which rises in the firmament of consciousness as a grand light fills both the mind and body with its brilliance. Thus the cosmic phenomenon of the physical dawn results in the psychic awakening of all sentient beings.

Upon waking a person is attracted to everything beautiful. The experience of beauty brings with it the desire to possess that beauty, or at least to relate with it. Such desires and consequent reactions transform the mood of a person. Of all moods, the brightest, most enjoyable, and dynamic one is the arousal of one's erotics, *śṛṅgāra*. In *śṛṅgāra* bipolarity is essential. Although bipolarity can happen between any two persons, it usually occurs between the male and female of the same species. In the erotic longing for each other, people undergo great changes. Love is like an alchemy. Giving oneself to the other as much as possible also entails receiving the other into oneself so that the angularities of each person's ego can be effaced. The male and female of each species are so made that they can feel that they have become one in a fond embrace. Through a process of exosmosis and endomosis, each becomes like the other.

In this kind of coupling, many hindrances come. One is an instinctive fear of losing oneself and being destroyed by the domination of the counterpart. It is allegorically alluded to in this verse as the frightened deer, which is looking hither and thither with its wild eyes, filled both with curiosity and fear. Man and woman are intrigued to know each other and yet are apprehensive of the traps laid within the other. Each wants to possess the other but looks for a way to escape.

To make oneself acceptable to the other, men and women of the human species make themselves attractive in a number of ways. While the vulgar give attention to their physical charm by painting their faces, putting on fashionable clothes and getting into many exhibitionist ways, the more serious and thoughtful among them try to excel by enriching their personalities to the measure of their moral, intellectual, and spiritual abilities. In Jungian psychology, the interplay of *animā* and *animus* is studied in detail. In Bhojarāja's *Śṛṅgāra Prākāśa* one of the finest theories of man-woman dialectics is given. When a man loves an ordinary woman, he wants to be highly valued in her eyes. The reverse is even truer as the female wants to convince her man that she is the most unique woman of rare virtues. In the field of attraction, there are many competitors. Every attraction is closely shadowed by distractions, and the venom of jealousy can easily flow into the minds of a loving couple. Therefore, every lover is on the alert to make his or her acceptance total and fully assured.

In the case of a *yogī*, he cares little for the admiration of a woman who has physical charm but no spiritual worth. His ambition is to become accepted by the supreme goddess herself. Between lovers the transparency for detecting flaws in each other increases and even the faintest discrepancy is observed with shocking pain. So when the *yogī*'s counterpart is none other than the very goddess of wisdom, he increases his virtues to the highest limits of perfection. The goddess, however, is not a person but the one beauty that permeates both the earth and the heavens, and its source is the same for male and female. To match that brilliance, the *yogī* attains an expansive vision through intense meditation. When a man is thus filled with the beauty of the supreme source of absolute beauty itself, he becomes sought after by everyone, especially the members of the opposite sex, and even more so when their tastes are refined and cultivated.

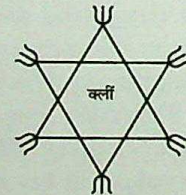
There is a special reference to Urvaśī in this verse. Once there was a *yogī*, Nārāyaṇa by name. When he did penance with great ascetic zeal, Indra, the king of gods, became frightened that Nārāyaṇa, through his excellence, might become greater than him and claim the throne of heaven. Indra conspired to foil the spiritual discipline of Nārāyaṇa and sent a group of celestial beauties to cause erotic agitation in his mind. The celestial maids came before the ascetic and sang and danced. When the *yogī* opened his eyes, he saw the amusing drama enacted by the girls at the behest of Indra. He wanted to tell Indra that there are values higher than physical charm, and with that intention he struck his thigh with his hand. There sprang out of his thigh a beautiful woman who could not be rivaled by any celestial nymph. He named this girl Urvaśī, being "an attractive one who came from his thigh (*ūruḥ*)." She was asked to go with the celestial nymphs to Indra and tell him that a *yogī* can make a million beauties like her by a mere wish. The last word of this verse, *gīrvāṇaganikāḥ*, is very suggestive. It means a beautiful woman of highly-cultured or Sanskritized mind. It is here that the concept of beauty is revalued and restated.

This *yantra* relates to the power bestowed by this meditation on the Devī who is presiding over the *kāmarājakaṭa* in the form of *icchāśakti*. The main *mantra* is *klīm*. From the apex of the triangle, going around clockwise, the *mantras* are: *kā, ma, de, vā, ya, namaḥ*, and in the center is *klīm*.



Flying spirits. Stone sculptures. Temple of Durgā, Aihole. India. Fifth to seventh century.

Durgā is that manifestation of Śakti that combines aspects of a warrior goddess and a mother figure. In an important temple dedicated to Durgā, these two spirits, the complementary male and female, are flying in the transparent cosmic sky as her guardians and attendants.



का म दे वा य नमः
kā, ma, de, vā, ya, namaḥ

klīm

Verse Nineteen

मुखं बिन्दुं कृत्वा कुचयुगमधस्तस्य तदधो
हरार्धं ध्यायेद् यो हरमहिषि ते मन्मथकलाम्।
स सद्यः संक्षोभं नयति वनिता इत्यतिलघु
त्रिलोकीमप्याशु भ्रमयति रवीन्दुस्तनयुगाम्॥

*mukham bindum kṛtvā kucayugamadhastasya tadadho
harārdham dhyāyed yo haramahīṣi te manmathakalām ।
sa sadyaḥ saṁkṣobham nayati vanitā ityatilaghu
trilokīmapyāśu bhramayati ravīndustanayugām॥*

O Consort of Hara, he who envisions your face at the *bindu*,
and below that your two breasts, the sun and the moon,
and the triangle below the sun and moon with the royal seed
(*klīm*) of your love-generating dynamics: he stirs
the procreative energy of the female counterpart,
including the Creatrice of the three worlds.



We live in the factual world of here and now, in time and space, recognizing our own body and all the surrounding ones, including the countless billions floating in space. Facts are then interpreted by ideas, which are not like things. Ideas are not sitting here or there. They are born of the mind.

Consciousness is not experienced as limited within the body outline. It is at once inside and outside. Ideas are illuminated by the supreme spirit. Thus, in the search for the real we linger at three points: the factual, the ideal, and the real. Meditation on these three levels is not possible unless the mind is gathered to a unitive focus. Each person recognizes his or her unitive focus as a self-luminous point within, without which no orientation of ideas is possible. Interlacing the factual, the ideal, and the real into a single, unitive meditation is done by taking three points in a vertical parameter in which the omega is located at the *ājñā*, the synergic center between the two eyebrows. However small the physical body, the entire cosmos is experienced from within the center of one's own individuated

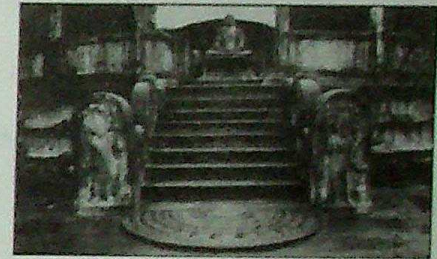
consciousness. It is as if the central unitive focus of that person's consciousness is the center of his or her universe.

Meditation commences in the form of a throb or pulsation felt at the *bindu* between the two eyebrows. Every pulsation has in it a rhythmic expansion and contraction. The expansion can be extended to infinity. The contraction from every point of the infinite horizon of consciousness can radially converge to the mathematical point of the *bindu*. This happens in the form of the alternating movement of energy from the *bindu* into all directions and then the reception of the energy back to the central point. This meditation does not involve any perception or vision. It is a state of pure existence and pure being. The Absolute is beyond experience; it is beyond comprehension of any kind. And yet it is, ultimately, the ground of all reality. A reflection of it is mirrored in one's own individuation, and there the *bindu* gains the status of pure *sattva*. *Sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas* are the triple dynamics of the procreative energy of nature. If these three are looked upon as a triangle, the apex of that triangle is *sattva*. That operates from the *bindu* in the *ājñā*, the unitive center between the eyebrows. In this meditation, after sitting for awhile in the *sattva* aspect of nature, the searching mind is empowered with the *mantra klīm*, which is a seed *mantra*. It is called *kāma rāja bija* (the seed of royal desire). The desire here is to unravel the field of ideas and the field of acts from which the fecundity of creation arises and manifests into the multi-million beings of this world.

After gaining a stable ground in the *ājñā*, the meditation moves down to the *anāhata* (the heart plex). On either side of the heart plex are seen, like the two breasts of the Supreme Creatrice, the sun and the moon. The sun and the moon are the symbols, respectively, of presentative objects and representative ideas. Here, the central *bindu* located in the *anāhata* is understood as having an oscillation between the seer and the seen. The two modes of procreative energy operating at this level are *sattva* and *tamas*. This is a binary system with factual objects and the registry of their affective impact. The sun stands for the fact that is perceived or experienced, while the moon stands for the impression of what is perceived or experienced and then converted into a concrete idea for storage in memory. *Sattva* illuminates and *tamas* stabilizes or freezes. Here light and shadow, the real and the unreal, come together and blend into experience. A meditation at this level enables the meditator to discern between the

true and the untrue, fact and fiction, values that are transient and those that are perennial. Again the *mantra* meditated on is *klīm* (*kāma rāja bīja*). Physical nourishment is symbolized by the sun and emotional nourishment by the moon. The transactional, physical reality provides us with tangibility. The cherished memory of that experience gives it a long time span as it is deposited as a memory of the past and then recalled into the present to give a dynamic thrust for a repeated experience in the future. This meditation enables one to unravel the secrets of the *elan vital*, the ongoing actualization of the libidinal energy which one experiences in everyday life as the continuous train of attraction and repulsion. It also helps to repair the damage done to one's own psyche, through lack of insight, and it restructures and reharmonizes the psyche so that it becomes rectified of its pathological repression and consequential psychosis.

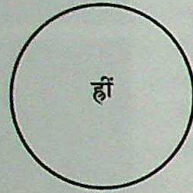
The meditator next goes below the *anāhata*. A mystical triangle is conceived with its base connecting the *mūlādhāra* and the *maṇipūra* with the apex at the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. This is a difficult form of meditation because here one leaves both the physical body (*sthūla* or gross) and the subtle body (*sūkṣma*) and enters into the causal body (*kāraṇa*). This is the most subtle repository, or seed bed, for generating individuation of all sorts. *Sattva* is in the *maṇipūra*, *tamas* in the *mūlādhāra*, and *rajas* in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. But these positions are not permanently fixed. Each is chasing the other and each is displaced from its natural location to move into the next. The *bījākṣara klīm* cannot be activated with a conscious mind, just as a seed buried in the earth has a functioning and an elaboration which cannot be seen. The meditator has to remain content that the strictly guarded secret of the unconscious will surface. This is seen in the begetting of a child in which both the father and the mother are kept blindfolded. Their only reward is the orgasmic bliss that effaces for a short while all sense of duality. Without any effort on their part, a third factor emerges, the *praja*, the new individual. Thus in the triangle of the *mūlādhāra*, the *svādhiṣṭhāna*, and the *maṇipūra*, there is a representation of the father, the mother, and the newly-generated child. Here one uses one's own body as an experimental tool to understand the creative function of the entire universe. The three *bindus* vertically marked are once again scaled step by step. The meditator mounts from the causal to the ideal where the oscillation happens between the ideal and the factual, and from there to the real where the unconditioned, by its sheer



Stūpa entrance and doorstep. Polannaruwa, Sri Lanka. Like earlier, more archaic monuments, Buddhist structures recreated the spiritual universe in miniature. Stūpas were built to house relics, and around the center core that held the sacred object the building was constructed as an architectural maṇḍala. By walking through and worshipping at the stūpa, the devotee participates in universal patterns and relationships. The center of the stūpa is symbolic of the bindu or locus of consciousness. Moving outward are various walls representative of different levels of awareness. At each of the four cardinal points there are open gates. In this particular stūpa from Polannaruwa, the statue of the Buddha, or enlightened one, occupies the center position. Guarding the main entrance are two yakṣas, forest nature spirits, who designate the sublimated vital urge that is now in reverence to the transcendent Buddha-mind. The stone half-moon doorstep also displays stages of awareness in visual form with varying flora and fauna. At the outer edge is the swan, symbol of the life-giving breath and its inward-outward pulse: haṁsa. And at the very center is the empty space of śūnyatā, the potent and dynamic void that gives birth to all manifestations.

presence, infuses the power to see and know into the conditioned. Thus, when a person is fully instructed, the universe becomes a cosmic woman and he is a cosmic male. It makes no difference whether the meditator is a male or a female because no person is completely male or female. Both are in either.

The *mantra hrīṁ* is meditated upon in a circle *yantra* for this verse.



hrīṁ

Verse Twenty

किरन्तीमङ्गेभ्यः किरणनिकुरुम्बामृतरसम्।
हृदि त्वामाधत्ते हिमकरशिलामूर्तिमिव यः।
स सर्पाणां दर्पं शमयति शकुन्ताधिप इव
ज्वरप्लुष्टान् दृष्ट्या सुखयति सुधासारसिरया॥

*kirantīmaṅgebhyaḥ kiraṇa nikurumbāmṛtarasam
hṛdi tvāmādhatte himakara śilāmūrtim iva yaḥ ।
sa sarpāṇāṃ darpaṃ śamayati śakuntādhipa iva
jvarapluṣṭān dṛṣṭyā sukhayati sudhāsāra sirayā ॥*

The nectar-like reflective rays that shower from your limbs,
when envisioned in the heart of an aspirant
as an image of cool moonstone: such a person,
having become a recipient of psychic energy,
which is like ambrosia, pacifies the pride of snakes and
quells by a mere glance the fever of those who suffer from it.



The noumenon and the phenomenon are so unitively placed that the one is known by the other. The union of *Śiva* and *Śakti* is one such placement. The self-luminous light of the noumenon is reflected by the phenomenal in all directions with all variegated colors and significance. This is like the streaming forth of ambrosial rays from the limbs of the Supreme Creatrice. The transcendental lord is *niravayavī* (one without limbs) and the creatrice is *sa avayavī* (one with the entire universe for limbs).

The meditating *yogī* is a person who seats himself in absolute composure before the deity in the sanctum of his own heart. The worshiper who is propitiating the deity cannot, however, relate to the incomprehensible, limbless, transcendent Absolute. So, instead, he goes inward and imperientially identifies with the spirit that animates his own self from the tip of his toes to the crown of his head. In every capillary of his nervous system he can feel the flow of the ambrosial energy of the life-giving grace of the divine in the form of *prāṇa*. After envisioning the full play of *prāṇa*

within himself, the propitiator projects it on the idol before him. The stone or metallic image before the worshiper is no longer an inert mass; the worshiper's own phenomenal existence has been introjected (*prāṇapratiṣṭhā*) into the image. That serves as a window through which to look into the marvel of the Absolute, which is at once *Śiva* and *Śakti*. Like two triangles, one with its apex pointing towards earth and the other with its apex pointing towards heaven, they are interlaced. A region exists within the interlacing of the triangles: in that *maṇḍala*, the propitiator places himself. The fivefold elemental principles and the fourfold principles of divine creativity encompass his being.

Three positions are taken, one at the crown of the head, the second in the *anāhata*, and the third in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. The worshiper meditates on *aum*, or *praṇava*, in the *sahasrāra*. It is to be filled with the showering beams of the world-generating energy, out of which he can distill, like a swan (*haṁsa*), the transcendental of the *turiya*, which remains in the remote ground as the eternal being. In contradistinction, he will also see the primeval cause surging up in all possible imaginings of *taijasa* and becoming the concrete reality of the transactional world. Thus, through sympathy and bipolarity, the propitiator diffuses his ego and spreads out into the entirety of the phenomenal and the noumenon. Here the *yogī* is in *samādhi*. His psychic energy is infused with the creative gleam of the very spirit that causes the world to manifest.

Next the *yogī* transports the locus of concentration to the *anāhata* and meditates on the mystical syllables *kṣa pa*. This is a meditation which prepares the *yogī*'s self to be totally consumed by his intense devotion. His own libidinal energy is roused only to tame and sublimate it. Instead of allowing the libidinal energy to dissipate and escape the organism through *apāna*, the downward-going vital energy, the *yogī* directs it upward. The emotionally charged libidinal energy raises its hood like a captive cobra. Psychically it is interlinked with the eagle-like intelligence (*buddhi*), which is super-animated with the pure light of the Absolute.



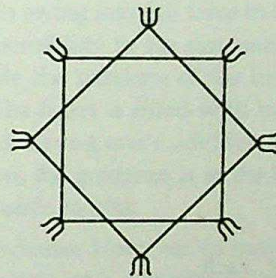
Cave fresco. Sigiriya, Sri Lanka, c. fifth century.

In these noble women that are painted in a cave at Sigiriya, we see that same "compassionate glance of the goddess that grants the devotee a state of oneness." The full image of these frescoes is of the women walking northward (in the direction of an important Buddhist shrine), strewing flowers from baskets that they are carrying, presumably paying homage to the Buddha.

The progenerative energy becomes transformed into *ojas*, yogic radiance. Here the propitiator places his residual ego that is to be burned in the *svādhiṣṭhāna* into the flames of his intense love for the divine and meditates on the mystic syllables of consummation, *svāhā*.

When a piece of iron is magnetized, it begins to act as a magnet. Even so, the *yogī* becomes a crucible of alchemy and by his sheer glance can pacify the tormenting libidinal urges in others. Instead of gross passion for sexual union, there comes a love for the sublime. This quells the feverishness of competitive life. There is no longer any rivalry or fear. The *yogī* becomes a haven of peace for others, and in him is seen the meaning of every quest and the answer to every problem. A rare blessedness comes to stay. *Aum kṣīpa svāhā*.

The *yantra* for meditation employs three *mantras* — *aum*, *kṣīpa*, *svāhā* — within two squares, one placed over the other at a 45° rotation.



ॐ क्षिप स्वाहा
aum kṣīpa svāhā

Verse Twenty-one

तटिल्लेखातन्वीं तपनशशिवैश्वानरमयीं
निषण्णां षण्णामप्युपरि कमलानां तव कलाम्।
महापद्माटव्यां मृदितमलमायेन मनसा
महान्तः पश्यन्तो दधति परमाह्लादलहरीम्॥

taṭillekhātanvīm tapanaśaśivaiśvānaramayīm
niṣaṇṇām ṣaṇṇām apyupari kamalānām tava kalām ।
mahāpadmāṭavyām mṛditamalamāyena manasā
mahāntaḥ paśyanto dadhati paramāhlāda laharīm ॥

O Supreme Mother, seated in the great lotus
of countless petals, situated above the six lotuses,
your resplendence is like a lightning streak of the
sun, moon, and fire. When your manifestation,
comprised of the *bindu*, *nāda*, and *kalā*, and
culminating in your union with the Lord, is seen
by those blessed ones who are free of the taint of *māyā*,
the confusing confection of the real and the unreal,
is immersed in the billowing upsurge of ultimate joy.

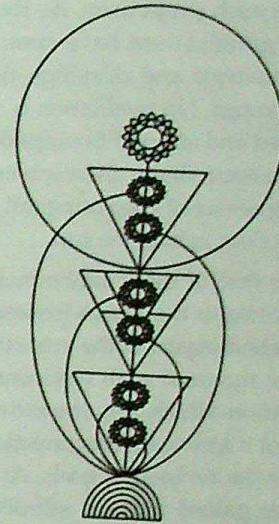


In man there is a moth, a lotus flower, and a *yogi*, each wanting to be united with light. To enter the kingdom of God every person is to be born twice. The first birth is the responsibility of nature, which revels in the game of hide and seek. Truth and untruth are mixed in equal quantities and man is held a captive of deceptive appearances. Until he becomes fully disciplined, he very often mistakes the unreal for the real and the real for the unreal. This aspect of *māyā* is negative when contrasted with the neutral aspect of the Absolute, yet it is not altogether negative because the power and glory of the Absolute reside in this world-generating process. Where Śaṅkara calls it *māyā*, Rāmānuja calls it *līlā vibhūti* (the sportive power of God). In the *Bhagavad-Gītā* it is aptly termed as the *yogamāyā* of the lord. In Narayana Guru's *Daiva Daśakam*, God is described

as the illusion of phenomenality, the magician who deludes, the rejoicer of the magical element of illusion, and the compassionate one who ultimately releases beings from the snare of *māyā*. That final release comes at the farthest end of the second birth of man and woman.

The *jīva*, the fully born individual, receives the baptism of fire in the two lower synergic centers, the *mūlādhāra* and the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. The path from the alpha to the omega is barred by six gates through which one has to pass before being allowed to reach the blessing of the omega. From the *kulakuṇḍa*, the hidden pit from which the seed of life emerges, the search is guided by fire to the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. This is the fire of alchemy to which the compulsiveness of blind nature is exposed for purificatory discipline. In the lowest *cakra*, the *mūlādhāra*, the seeker is even ignorant of what he seeks and how he is led, because this is a period where nature herself is equipping the individual and giving indirect instruction to set a goal for life. In the next *cakra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, all the pangs of adolescence and puberty are to be lived. A baptism of fire is appropriate at this age. All the endocrine glands swing into full force in the prime of youth. Then fire hands over its responsibility to the sun, and the love for knowledge lifts the soul; for awhile the passions of the heart lend wings for each person to soar high. The heart is filled with the convictions of higher ideals and a need for declaring one's adulthood arises. Words come as liberators. From there on, the guidance is in the hands of the moon. That is the passage from *viśuddhi* to *ājñā*.

This is the general scheme. However, in most people both the search and its attainments remain at a superficial level. Only one among a thousand, once in a thousand years, realizes that the path from his *mūlādhāra* to the *ājñā* is really blocked. What his peers take is only a shadow path of conventional culture and the sophistication of worldly search. The sifting of truth from untruth, termed by the wise as *nityānitya viveka*, the exercising of discrimination between transient and perennial values, is taken seriously only by a rare aspirant. All persons born of flesh are susceptible to the snares of the flesh. The discrete person differentiates love from attachment, anger from detachment, and the desirable from hedonistic desires. In this person's life the battle of the spirit commences at a young age. He or she sees the value affectivity projected by the senses on external objects and clearly perceives the deceptive imagination



Cakras. Computer drawing, Andrew Larkin.

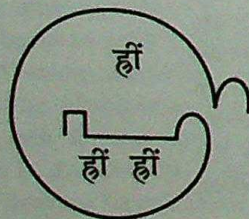
A geometric scheme of the bodily loci of energy and their various interrelationships.

inlaid in such projections. As the aspirant gains maturity, he also learns that all gratifications have cumulative effects. He starts recognizing, in his infatuations and cleavings, dark compulsiveness created by previous conditionings. No meditation is valid until and unless all colorations are decolored and all conditionings deconditioned. The fiery flames of biologic urges cannot shake themselves of nature's dictates. That is why the aspiring novice of yoga brings all the three levels of his or her subliminal life into the clear light of the sun.

The first of these subliminal aspects is the seeded mind of the past, which contains the *vāsanās* (nascent memories) that are seeking actualization. The second aspect is the attraction-repulsion interaction going on in the present moment with environmental promptings. The third is a goal orientation which sets the mind moving in specified directions. Every moment is a moment for correction, for the replenishing of spiritual stamina, and for the revision of goals. At the more advanced level, the *yogī* applies wisdom gained through self-discipline. His words and actions now bear witness to his inner vigilance. He is like the supreme lotus, thousand-petaled, which has in it the cream of humankind's entire culture.

It is accepted that for the final stage one has to wait. It is a leap possible only through grace. Fire, sun, and moon have successively been conducting the *yogī* to the sublime heights where the spirit transcends *bindu*, *nāda*, and *kalā*. Then one meets with the unalloyed bliss in which the noumenon cannot be differentiated from the phenomenon. What was previously seen as a slow conduction from fire to sun, sun to the moon is now seen like an electrical charge, the flash of lightning comprised of the essence of the moon, sun, and fire. Here the seeker ultimately gains the full status of the seer. The surging of the billowy waves of supreme joy washes away all sense of duality.

The *mantra hrīṁ* is placed within the following *yantra* for meditation.



hrīṁ

Verse Twenty-two

भवानि त्वं दासे मयि वितरं दृष्टिं सकरुणा-
मिति स्तोतुं वाञ्छन् कथयति भवानि त्वमिति यः।
तदैव त्वं तस्मै दिशसि निजसायुज्यपदवीम्
मुकुन्दब्रह्मेन्द्रस्फुटमकुटनीराजितपदाम्॥

*bhavāni tvam dāse mayi vitara dṛṣṭim sakaruṇām-
iti stotum vāñchan kathayati bhavāni tvamiti yah ।
tadaiva tvam tasmai diśasi nijasāyujyapadavīm
mukunda brahmendra sphuṭa makuṭa nīrājita padām ॥*

O Bhavānī, please give this slave a compassionate glance.
When one desiring to praise you utters the words,
“You, O Lady” (which also means, “May I be you”),
you instantaneously grant him a state of
oneness with you, your feet illuminated by the
crests of Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Śiva, who offer to you *nīrājana*,
the fire-waving ceremony, with their prostrations.



Like a wave emerging from water, we also assume the role of an individual being by rising out of the vast expanse of the infinite. After attaining its peak, the wave declines and merges back into water. Though at no stage is the wave separated from water, it seems to have a personality of its own. It acts as a single unit yet is never outside the expanse of water, and the wave cannot go beyond the bounds of the ocean. In spite of the reality of the wave's oneness with the watery expanse, there is a momentary forgetfulness of the real as a result of assuming the consciousness, “I am the wave.” Someone has to say, “No, you are water through and through.” This is the gist of the great dictum of the Upaniṣads, *tat tvam asi* (You are That). The present verse directs the meditator to the discipline of becoming totally united with the whole and leaving nothing of the subject or object outside the whole with which he or she has to identify *in toto*.

All actions, including meditation, are goal oriented. Perceiving a goal, placing it at a distance in time, choosing a path to attain it, and moving in that direction, are all to be visualized as in a strategic attack. A field is chosen before the commencement of the march and progressive instructions are sought and given. Instruction is a language. By arranging our thoughts in a coherent manner, action then follows in accord with proper logistics. The word command that is given from moment to moment to enable you to walk the path from where you are to where you want to be is the *mantra*. It is what should dominate the mind at all times. When the driver of an automobile is commanding his machine, the actualization of the *mantra* is done through a series of ritualistic actions. Every thought that passes through his mind in connection with the operation of the machine becomes instantaneously actualized. There is an intrinsic relationship between the word and the mechanical device. The device is *yantra*. *Mantra* gives the command and *yantra* carries it out. Both are employed as a part of a long-term or short-term achievement program. The whole program is a *tantra*.

The long-term program of a person who has emerged from the infinitude of time and space is to merge back into that infinitude. Thus, one's entire life program is a *tantra*, the person's mind-body equipment is a *yantra*, and the person's education is a *mantra*. A good workman should know his tools. In our case, the tool and its operator are not two. It is a self-governing machine with a self-programmed assignment. However, the psychophysical device has in it a physical mass animated by spiritual, purposive illumination. These two aspects come from opposite sides, as it were, and are so interlaced that no single part can be considered entirely physical or entirely spiritual.

For the purpose of a proto-linguistic understanding, the inlaid scheme of a person functioning within a cosmic system is given as a *Śrīcakra*. The bracketing of the whole process is marked by a square with four entrances or exits, one on each side. Within that are three circles. In the interior of the circular field, five triangles are drawn. Interpenetrating these triangles, four other triangles are drawn from the opposite side. A central locus is marked in the middlemost triangle. That is called a *bindu*. The first five triangles stand for the five elements — earth, water, fire, air, and ether (*ākāśa*). The triangles that represent the elements are *śaktitattoas*. The four

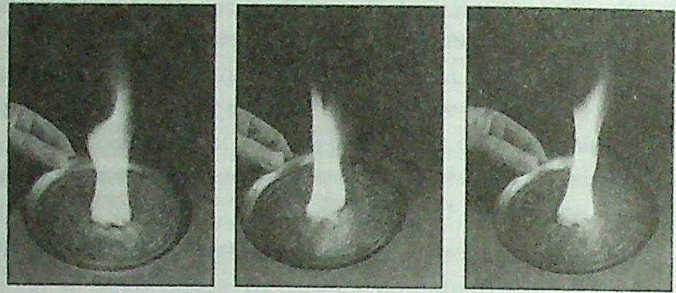
triangles that are interlocked with them represent the supreme spirit, the overseeing consciousness, word-knowledge, and the principle of phenomenality and are called the *śivatattvas*. All of these elements are to be understood as constituents of both the macrocosm and the microcosm. The unfoldment of both these cosmos is to be conceived like the opening of a flower. In the scheme of *śrīvidyā*, two fully opened lotus flowers are marked, one within the other.

Although at an initial stage the meditator may need a physical diagram to direct his meditation, at a more advanced stage he should think of himself as the *yantra*, functioning within the cosmos which is a greater *yantra* (device) to which he organically belongs. After attuning himself to the device of the cosmos, he familiarizes himself with both the structure and function of the *yantra* which is at his disposal. The first characteristic he notices is that the entire device is placed within a magnetic field. The field is not chaotic, it puts things into order. It is as if there is an overseeing intelligence which desires that things be attracted in such a way that the union of the constituent elements of the universe smoothly carry out the purpose of creation. This most preliminary understanding is recognized as the first divine step. In the context of *śrīvidyā*, it is called *kāmākaraṣiṇī* (*kāma* meaning desire and *ākaraṣaṇa* attraction). Desirable attraction is poetically conceived and addressed in the feminine gender. Thus it is attributed to the Supreme Mother as one of her functions.

There is mutual attraction between electrons, protons, and neutrons and the coming together of these particles makes an atom. The huddling together of atoms causes the occurrence of molecules. Molecular adherences give shape to bodies. The meditator turns in that direction and sees in the divine plan the concretization of bodies and sees in the Supreme Mother the agent of concretization, worshipping her as *śarīrākaraṣiṇī* (*śarīra* meaning body). Although bodies look transient, they are carriers of an eternal program. Nothing is ever destroyed. There is a conservation of energy, in spite of the transformation of matter. Seeing the immortal in the mortal, the eternal in the transient, is the next step of meditation. The Supreme Mother is here worshiped as *amṛtākaraṣiṇī* (*amṛta* meaning the immortal).

Nothing is disjunct. The world is not an aggregate of loose particles, but has a universal soul that is holding everything together. This is the item for the next meditation. The supreme is adored here as *ātmākaraṣiṇī*

(*ātma* meaning the Universal Self within the individual). The perpetuation of creation is through a process of elaboration and condensation. The species of a tree is continued by comprising its essentials into a seed and unfolding them again into a tree. This reduction of every aspect into a seeded state is the next item in meditation. It is attributed to the divine and the Mother is called *bijākaraṣiṇī* (*bija* meaning seed). For the conscious recognition of every part of the scheme, names are devised for each constituent part. The entire world of knowledge is woven out of concepts and there is a grand library of nomenclature from which structured languages come. This leads us to the next meditation when the Supreme Mother is adored as *nāmākaraṣiṇī* (*nāma* meaning name).



Burning camphor, commonly used in worship services in Indian temples.

"Your feet are illuminated by the crests of Viṣṇu, Brahmā, and Śiva, who offer to you nirājana (the fire-waving ceremony) with their prostations." The fire of realization burns our attachments and conditionings to ashes, while the fragrance of the camphor fills the air with the pungent beauty of knowledge.

Each name is suggestive of the class to which it belongs, but a name is useless unless it can be remembered at the right time. Conscious memory makes humankind superior to all other animals, and yet no one knows where memory resides. There is no way to evoke it. It is as if a divine hand is stealthily hiding all experienced impressions, and then the same hand is bringing them back at the most appropriate time in the quickest possible manner. This aspect is meditated upon by meditating on the divine as *smṛtyākaraṣiṇī* (*smṛti* meaning memory). For the retention of memory there has to be consistency in intelligence. The dull headed are those that have no stamina to keep vigilance. One has to sharpen one's wits and keep inwardly alive and awake. This executive function is attributed to the Mother and she is worshiped as *dhairyākaraṣiṇī* (*dhairya* is brightness and consistency in intelligence).

Without inner clarity and a well-organized interconnection of memory, the intellect cannot function harmoniously. Experiences are reduced to information bits by the faculty of recall where they are coded and stored as *citta*. Hence the Mother is worshiped as *cittākaraṣiṇī*. There are catalysts which can tickle and stimulate. At the grossest level is the olfactory bombardment of the nodules of the nose. Meditation on this element comes in the form of propitiating the Mother as *gandhākaraṣiṇī* (*gandha* meaning smell). What is important in smell is the isolation of the essence

of a thing. Life in itself is a composition of many essences. Our mind is put into different moods according to the essential character of a given situation. Distilling the essential from the gross is the next stage of meditation, therefore the Mother is worshiped as *rasākaraṣiṇī* (*rasa* being the taste or essence of something).

We live in a world which is gigantically vast and things are distinguished because of the unique form and bodily shape given to each one. Even by simply examining a few leaves and flowers we can see the marvel of formal design that is shown in the physical creation of the world. This is the next venue of meditation. At this stage the Mother is worshiped as *rūpākaraṣiṇī* (*rūpa* meaning form). Nothing convinces us more of the truth of a thing than its tangibility. The most real is that which can be touched and handled. A berry in the hand needs no other testimony to vouchsafe its reality. Unlike the other sense-organs, the organ of touch has no limitation. At any part of the body a touch can be received. This is the field for this meditation and the Mother is propitiated as *sparsākaraṣiṇī* (*sparsa* meaning touch). For touch contact is needed. The one element that permeates everything is the *ākāśa* (ether) in which all bodies are placed. The quality of *ākāśa* is *śabda* (sound). If the eyes enable us to see, with the ear we hear. Communication is mainly through the organ of hearing. This is the next area of meditation and the Mother is propitiated as *śabdākaraṣiṇī*.

When everything said so far is located in one agent of orientation, we understand the fuller significance of the individuated self. This agency is better known as I-consciousness (*ahamkāra*). The supreme dwells in each person with the unique identity of a separate ego. It is here that we meditate and the Mother is praised as *ahamkāraṣiṇī* (*ahamkāra* meaning the ego). *Ahamkāra* cannot function if there is no faculty of judgment. Everything is to be indicated, interpreted and judged for its validity. This faculty should also be meditated upon. In this context the Mother is called *buddhyākaraṣiṇī*. Thus we complete one round of the sixteen outer petals of the psycho-cosmological and biological aspects of the *yantra* to which we belong.

Worship and meditation in the inner lotus wrestle with many unforeseen perils and hazards. They can be compared to walking on the sharp edge of a razor. After passing through the sixteen meditations of

the outer lotus, the mind of the aspiring *yogī* becomes supersensitive and his or her psychic energy is ready to flow in any direction. Damming, blocking, and channeling it can offer more difficulties than riding on an untamed wild horse. All the sharpening of wits achieved through the meditation on the sixteenth petal of the outer lotus presided over by *buddhyākārṣiṇī* suddenly turn out to be of no consequence as one enters into the first petal of the inner lotus presided over by the two forces of *tvaritā* and *kulasundarī*. The mind starts spinning at a great speed and the meditator becomes restless in his seat. (*Tvaritā* itself means that which moves at a great speed.) Libidinal energy cannot be compared with physical energy. Physical energy is flowing through a channel from one location in space to another location. Psychic energy is not a substance. It is a number of interactions that happen, that on one side enable the biological needs to be satisfied and, on the other, are wielded by the volitional power of the ego centered in the persona.

If the aspirant is holding out as his goal an ideal which is at odds with his natural urges, the psychic energy which is booming within him is not flowing in any direction. The likelihood is of a conflagration of energy that tries to burn out the excess by causing agitation in the psyche. The inner operating principle is called *anaṅgamadanā*, which means the bodiless Eros trying to woo the psyche. Here the psyche, as the Greek legend portrays, is a superior and highly dignified female consciousness which does not want to yield like a slave. She demands Eros to stop his hiding tactics and reveal his true face. The actual situation is far from conducive to meditation. The *yogī*'s mind is ready to become infatuated with even the slightest accessibility to beauty of any form. Contrary to expectation, here the female aspect of the psyche tampers with the *yogī*'s higher ideals. Thus he is torn between temptation and restraint. Any energy that is roused during the long term of meditation in this petal has to be properly channelized until the aspirant becomes convinced that he is firm in his seat.

The progression from the field of *anaṅgamadanā* to the next petal is like volunteering for a hazardous labor like that of Hercules. Here the erotics of the aspirant become acute. Because he is dealing with a natural passion, shared and lived by all beings, to resist it is like a man facing a tidal wave and trying to stop it with the palm of his hand. The presiding

deity is Nityā of the blue expanse. When a person is hungry, he can be appeased by a square meal, but after four or five hours he is again hungry. If food hunger is like a wolf, sexual hunger is like a tiger. In all the religious literature of mystics, we can read accounts of the acute temptation with which mystics struggle. In the Christian world, St. Augustine's and St. Loyola's fights with the devil are dramatized in great detail. In Indian Purāṇas and epics there are many stories of how the best among *yogīs* have failed when they are blinded by infatuation. Theories of sublimation do not hold good. One works out of this dire situation only by turning every iota of his psychic energy to the actualization of his love for the divine. In fact, this is the scheme adopted in all religions. In the Catholic religion all novices, male or female, are the brides of Jesus. He is the Beloved, and He is the only beloved. Any transference of that love to any other person or object is sinful. In the Tantric context, all love and allegiance are to be channeled to the feet of the Supreme Mother. Jehovah, *Yahweh*, is said to be a jealous God. Even so is Devī. Devotion has to become one-pointed.

When one comes victorious out of the turmoil of this fight with erotics, he is welcomed to the third petal, *anaṅgamadanātūrā*, presided over by Vijayā (goddess of victory) and Saravamaṅgalā (goddess of auspiciousness). This is an area of respite. One attains relaxation from the pull of objects and persons outside. But he has to pay the toll for making blockages in the flow of psychic energy. All energy is depleted, and the *yogī* feels absolutely exhausted. There is even the danger of regression into depression. One cannot do much other than pray for grace and wait for the replenishing of energy to move to the next petal, *anaṅgamālīnī*, where the presiding deities are Jvālamālīnī and Citrā. Almost half the way is accomplished, but mounting the heights can make a fall all the more disastrous. A new kind of temptation awaits the *yogī* here. He becomes supremely attractive. This is like the devil taking Jesus to a pinnacle, showing him the riches of the world and promising them all if only Jesus would pay homage to him. Thomas à Kempis in the *Imitation of Christ* says, "Lord, if I have not fallen, it is not by my virtue but by your grace."

Devotion is further intensified and one gains entry into the next petal presided over by Mahātripurasundarī and Kāmeśvarī. This is an area of grace. Love is experienced on all sides with the fragrance of freshly blossomed flowers. This area is of *anaṅgakusumā*, the flowering of love.

The goal is still far. Remorse is waiting now, remorse for choosing a path which is unnatural. Suddenly all the labors undergone look like precious time wasted for nothing. Intense frustration comes. It is as if the psyche has gone sour. The mind is filled with many anti-social revenges. Even faith in God looks like an illusion. The presiding deities are Bhagamālīnī and Nityaklīnā, and the area of worship is described as *anaṅgarekhā*.

Now the worshiper comes to the penultimate petal, *anaṅgamekhalā*, which is the last house of torment. Here the deities are demonic. They are Bheruṇḍī, a vampire-like demiurge, and Vahnivāsīnī. Many disconcerting visions of the most frightful nature come. One has to walk through the fire of the last temptation. This is the area of amorphous eroticism. After successfully completing this area, one goes into the last petal, *anaṅgaveginī*, presided over by the goddess of *śrīvidyā*, Mahāvidyeśvarī, and the messenger of the Lord, Śivadūti. Ultimately, the psychic energy is channeled to the Mother's divine feet.

With this, the worship of the petals of the inner lotus is completed and one comes into the apex of the inverted triangle. In this device there are fourteen external triangles, ten internal triangles, and five points arranged vertically in a descending order to the meditator. The first triangle in which the meditator enters has a *bīja-mantra*, *kaṁ*. Once again, the inner tranquility of the *yogī* is put to a severe test by the presiding deity, Sarvasamkṣobhinī, the principle of total agitation. The movement from here on is counterclockwise. The next triangle has the *bīja-mantra* *khaṁ*. Here the deity is Sarvavidrāvinī, an alchemy which dissolves all agitations. The ego also dissolves away. It is as if one has become an instrument of the Divine. The *bīja-mantra* of the next triangle is *gaṁ*. Here the deity is Sarvākārṣinī. Now there is love for all with no obligatory bondage. There is acceptance from all sides and all are seen in the image of God.

The next triangle has a *bīja-mantra* of *ghaṁ*. The presiding deity is Sarvāhlādinī. Here the *yogī* rejoices and becomes a great source of joy for all. The *bīja-mantra* of the next triangle is *ṇaṁ*. The presiding deity is Sarvasammohinī. From here on, some dangerous areas are to be crossed because many psychic powers are developed and the temptation to do miracles comes. If one is not on one's guard, one may degenerate into a charlatan. The *bīja-mantra* of the next triangle is *caṁ* and the presiding deity is

Sarvastambhīṇī. This is a state of becoming immobile. Outward consciousness leaves the body and the mind is drawn into the deep recesses of a spiritual absorption. In the next triangle the *bīja-mantra* is *charī*. Its presiding deity is Sarvajambhīṇī. Release comes when the mind becomes evanescent. It is as if one has expanded into everything. The sun and moon, the hills and dales, the sky and the ocean are seen as one's own extensions. The topmost triangle has *jam* for its *bīja-mantra*. The presiding deity is Sarvavaśaṁkarī. All enmity is gone and companionship comes easily with everyone.

The next triangle has *śarī* for the *bīja-mantra* and the deity is Sarvaraṅjanī. All the pairs of opposites leave the mind. There is no distinction between saint and sinner. The next has the *bīja-mantra* of *jīarī*. The presiding deity is Sarvonmādinī. Now one gets into God intoxication. To the people of the world, this person may look mad as the *yogī* does not concede to conventional formalities. He becomes erratic. At such a stage a person usually becomes an *avadhūta* (a homeless mendicant) wandering like an orphan in God. The next triangle has the *bīja-mantra* *ṭam*. The presiding deity is Sarvārthasāadhanī. Absolute blessedness comes. There is a great sense of fulfillment. The next triangle's *bīja-mantra* is *ṭharī*. The presiding deity is Sarvasampattipūrāṇī. From here onward, the *yogī* becomes a benefactor. His spiritual coffers are rich, and he can act as a teacher.

The next triangle's *bīja-mantra* is *ḍam*. The presiding deity is Sarvamantramayī. Now the matured and experienced *yogī* gains the status of a seer. He can formulate psychically dynamic *mantras*. He is a *mantradraṣṭā* (the seer of a *mantra*). The *bīja* of the next triangle, the last in the outer group, is *ḍharī*. The presiding deity is Sarvadvandvākṣayaṁkarī. There is no longer any duality. The devotee and the divine are now mutually exchangeable. From here, one enters into the inner triangle. The *mantra* is *ṇarī*. The deity is Sarvasiddhipradā. The *yogī* is now able to perform any act, but he uses his powers only when they are spiritually beneficial to the world. In the same counterclockwise path, one moves to the triangle which has *tarī* for a *bīja-mantra*. The deity is Sarvasampadpradā. There is no need to be fulfilled because everything is there for the mere wishing of it.

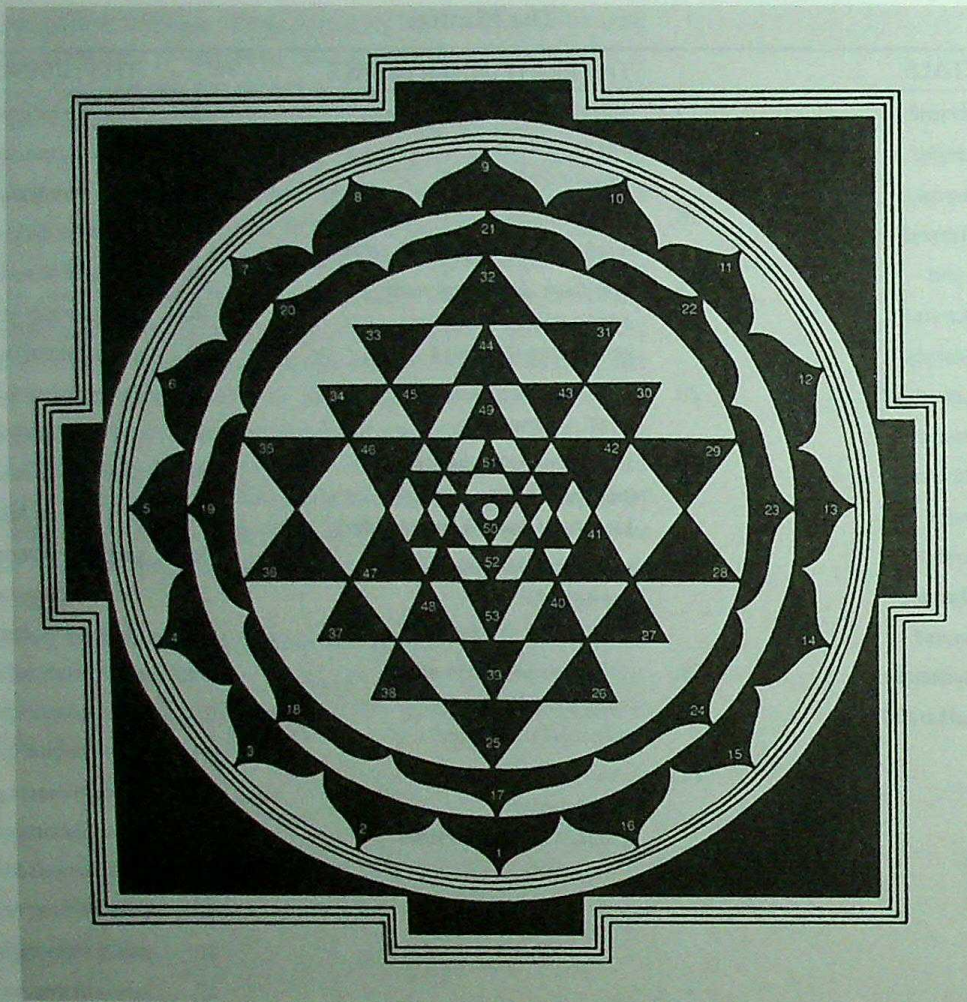
The next triangle has the *bīja-mantra* of *tharī*. The deity is Sarvapriyaṁkarī. One starts seeing very clearly that one's *ānanda*, or dear value, is also the dear value of all others. The next *mantra* is *dam* and the

deity is Sarvamaṅgalakāriṇī (cause of all auspiciousness). This is an area of absolute peace. The *bīja* of the next triangle is *dham*. The deity is Sarvakāmapradā. The highest possible desire is the desire for total emancipation. The *yogī* has attained it and he can now be its dispenser. The *bīja* of the next triangle is *nam*. The presiding deity is Sarvaduḥkhavimocanī (the savior or emancipator from all bonds). Birth and death, pain and pleasure, fame and shame are no longer shackles of the *jīva*. The next *bīja* is *pan*. The presiding deity is Sarvamṛtyupraśamanī. Now the last noose of death is removed. The next *bīja* is *phan*. The presiding deity is Sarvavighnanivāriṇī (remover of all hurdles). Here the last remnants of cumulative *karma* are burned off. The *bīja-mantra* of the next triangle is *ban*. The presiding deity is Sarvāṅgasundarī (absolutely beautiful). Here the divine and the beautiful are not two. The *bīja* of the next triangle is *bham*. The presiding deity is Sarvasaubhāgyadāyinī (bestower of supreme blessedness). Now one meditates on the crown of the head, *auri*; then in the heart, *śrīṇ*; then in the *ājñā*, *aiṇ*; then *hrīṇ* in the *viśuddhi*; and again in the heart with *saum*. With that the worship is brought to a close.

The *mantras* that indicate each state that the aspirant passes through in his progression in the *Śrīcakra* are labeled on the illustration, page 84. The numbers on the inner and outer petals and on the triangles correspond to the accompanying list.

The Mantras

THE OUTER PETALS	THE EIGHT INNER PETALS	THE TRIANGLES
1. <i>aṃ kāmākaraṣiṇī</i>	17. <i>ṭaṃ ṭhaṃ ḍaṃ ḍhaṃ ṇaṃ</i>	25. <i>kaṃ sarvasaṃkṣobhiṇī</i>
2. <i>aḥ śarīrākaraṣiṇī</i>	<i>anaṅgamaḍaṇā</i>	26. <i>khaṃ sarvavidrāviṇī</i>
3. <i>ṃ amṛtākaraṣiṇī</i>	<i>kulasundarī tvarita</i>	27. <i>gaṃ sarvākaraṣiṇī</i>
4. <i>auṃ ātmākaraṣiṇī</i>	18. <i>ṣaṃ ṣaṃ saṃ haṃ</i>	28. <i>ghaṃ sarvāhlādiṇī</i>
5. <i>oṃ bījākaraṣiṇī</i>	<i>anaṅgāṅkuṣā nilapatākā nityā</i>	29. <i>ṇaṃ sarvasammohiṇī</i>
6. <i>aiṃ nāmākaraṣiṇī</i>	19. <i>taṃ thaṃ daṃ dhaṃ naṃ</i>	30. <i>caṃ sarvastambhiṇī</i>
7. <i>eiṃ smṛtyākaraṣiṇī</i>	<i>anaṅgamadaṇātūrā</i>	31. <i>chaṃ sarvajṛmbhiṇī</i>
8. <i>lṛṃ dhairyākaraṣiṇī</i>	<i>sarvamaṅgalā vijayā</i>	32. <i>jaṃ sarvavāsaṃkārī</i>
9. <i>lṛṃ cittākaraṣiṇī</i>	20. <i>ṣaṃ kṣaṃ anaṅgamālīṇī</i>	33. <i>ṣaṃ sarvaraṇjantī</i>
10. <i>ṛṃ gandhākaraṣiṇī</i>	<i>citrā jvālāmālīṇī</i>	34. <i>jṇaṃ sarvonmādiṇī</i>
11. <i>ṛṃ rasākaraṣiṇī</i>	21. <i>kaṃ khaṃ gaṃ ghaṃ ṇaṃ</i>	35. <i>ṭaṃ sarvārthasādhani</i>
12. <i>ūṃ rūpākaraṣiṇī</i>	<i>anaṅgakusumā</i>	36. <i>ṭhaṃ sarvasampattipūraṇī</i>
13. <i>uṃ sparśākaraṣiṇī</i>	<i>kāmeśvarī mahātripurasundarī</i>	37. <i>ḍaṃ sarvamantramayī</i>
14. <i>īṃ śabdākaraṣiṇī</i>	22. <i>paṃ phaṃ baṃ bhaṃ maṃ</i>	38. <i>ḍhaṃ sarvadvandvākṣayaṃkārī</i>
15. <i>īṃ ahaṃkāraṣiṇī</i>	<i>anaṅgarekhā</i>	39. <i>ṇaṃ sarvasiddhipradā</i>
16. <i>āṃ buddhyākaraṣiṇī</i>	<i>nityaklinnā bhagamālīṇī</i>	40. <i>taṃ sarvasāmpadpradā</i>
	23. <i>caṃ chaṃ jaṃ jhaṃ ṇaṃ</i>	41. <i>thaṃ sarvapriyaṃkārī</i>
	<i>anaṅgamekhalā</i>	42. <i>daṃ sarvamaṅgalakāriṇī</i>
	<i>vahnivāsiniṇī bheruṇḍī</i>	43. <i>dhaṃ sarvakāmapradā</i>
	24. <i>yaṃ raṃ laṃ vaṃ</i>	44. <i>naṃ sarvaduḥkhaṇimocanī</i>
	<i>anaṅgavegiṇī</i>	45. <i>paṃ sarvāmṛtyuprasāmanī</i>
	<i>śivādūṭī mahāvidyeśvarī</i>	46. <i>phaṃ sarvavighnanivāriṇī</i>
		47. <i>baṃ sarvāṅgasundarī</i>
		48. <i>bhaṃ sarvasaubhāgyadāyini</i>
		49. <i>auṃ</i>
		50. <i>śrīṃ</i>
		51. <i>aiṃ</i>
		52. <i>hrīṃ</i>
		53. <i>saum</i>



Śrīcakra

Verse Twenty-three

त्वया हत्वा वामं वपुरपरितृप्तेन मनसा
शरीरार्धं शंभोरपरमपि शङ्के हतमभूत्।
यदेतत् त्वद्रूपं सकलमरुणाभं त्रिनयनं
कुचाभ्यामानम्रं कुटिलशशिचूडालमकुटम्॥

*tvayā hṛtvā vāmaṁ vapuraparitr̥ptena manasā
śarīrārdhaṁ śāmbhoraparamapi śaṅke hṛtamabhūt ।
yadetat tvadrūpaṁ sakalamaruṇābhaṁ trinayanam
kucābhyāmānamraṁ kuṭilaśaśicūdāla makuṭam ॥*

O Mother, after absorbing the left half of Śiva's body
and still unsatisfied by that in your mind, I surmise you have
absorbed the other half as well. Therefore, your entire form
appears to be blushing with magenta glory.
I see you with three eyes,
your hair decorated by a crescent moon and
your body slightly bent forward by a pair of breasts.



Yoga is the harmonized union of the supreme spirit and the tri-basic nature of manifestation. In the discipline of *prāṇāyāma*, it is the *prāṇa* and *apāna* coming into conjunction and vitalizing the whole system as *vyāna* and *samāna*. For the *yogī*, this union also includes the mingling of the *idā* and the *piṅgalā* in the *suṣumṇā*. In man-woman dialectics, *yoga* is the canceling out of all conflicting contradiction, with each side becoming complementary and compensatory to the other. The highest model of that union is seen in *Ardhanārīśvara* (androgynous union of Śiva and Śakti). In Vedānta an example of harmonious union that is often given is that of a transparent crystal placed on a hibiscus flower. Irrespective of the separate existence of the bodies of the crystal and the flower, the crystal looks all red. This does not do any harm to the crystal, nor is it accomplished by destructuring the crystal or the flower. Instead a union of both is effected by the ensemble.

The purpose of *yoga* is twofold. One intent is to go from plurality to the oneness or aloneness of unity (*kaivalya*); the other is to achieve the welfare of the world (*lokasaṅgraha*). *Śiva* and *Śakti* are not two persons. They only stand for, respectively, the plus and the minus of the primeval cause of the universe and the source of the sustenance of the world. Those *yogīs* who opt to enter into aloneness give primacy to the model of *Śiva*. Those who desire to bring welfare to the universe choose to become identified with the perfect example of the Mother. Neither *Śiva* nor *Śakti* are outside factors. They are like the alternating systole and diastole of the heartbeat. Only through a synchronizing of these complementary counterparts does the life process continue. From the previous verse on the worship of *Śrīcakra*, we have seen the several areas of functional details that are included in the *Śiva-Śakti* union or the *yoga* of spirit and nature. When we take the simple example of a candle burning, it is fire that burns. For its actualization there has to be the wax or fat for fuel and a wick to sustain the flame. The flame itself is a transformation of the fat. All these physical factors are like the embodiment of fire. However central the fire is, it is seen only as a candle burning. The same is true of the union of *Śiva* and *Śakti* in us. That is why, in the very first verse of the *Saundaryalaharī*, it is said that unless *Śakti* conjoins with *Śiva* the principle that *Śiva* represents cannot function.

The *yogī* who gains total identification with both *Śiva* and *Śakti* will show the characteristics of the Mother as described in the present verse. The dichotomy of the physical and the spiritual is resolved. The body becomes a receptacle of the purest joy of the spirit. The body we speak of here is the microcosm expanded and extrapolated into the macrocosm. All effects are revisioned as belonging to the original cause. In fact, this is the principle of all religions. Loving God with all your heart and all your mind and all your ability can be actualized only by loving one's neighbor as oneself. The brotherhood of man ensues from the fatherhood of God. In the *Īśa Upaniṣad*, compassion for all is based on the non-dual unity of the one Self that has become all this. The Supreme Mother absorbing the reality of *Śiva* in all its entirety is the same as a *yogī* seeing his Self in all and all in his own Self. The two eyes in the physical body are only to look and recognize individual bodies. The third eye is both to illuminate and to see. It is this third eye that clearly indicates that there is no separation

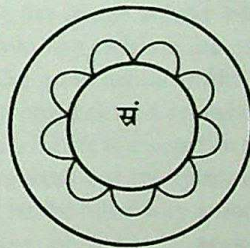


Ardhanārīśvara, the androgynous *Śiva*. Polished black stone carving. Purapara, Bangladesh. Pāla period, c. late eleventh century-early twelfth century.

In striking graphic form, Indian art displays the dynamic unity of opposites that *Śiva-Śakti* represent. In one body the two complementary halves are shown as mutually dependent and reinforcing. They cannot even be separated into a pair of bodies. At the center of conjunction is the vertical third eye of wisdom and insight that is attained through a harmonious balancing of male and female, transcendent and immanent.

between spirit and the nature through which the spirit manifests. While unmanifested light is invisible, manifested light assumes all colors. The magenta glory of the Mother stands for the coloration of the *Śiva* principle to become identified with *Śakti*. The two breasts to which specific reference is made are also significant. The breasts of the Mother symbolize the sustenance of the world. In Chinese mysticism (Mahāyāna Buddhism) Kwan Yin, the compassionate aspect of Lord Buddha, is depicted as a woman lovingly holding a baby in her lap. In Christian life also, piety is coupled with works. St. Francis is a good example of the motherly breast that makes spiritual life full. All the ordeals that a *yogi* undergoes in the worship of the *Śricakra* serve only make him or her tender and compassionate and unselfish like a mother in caring for the world to which he or she belongs.

The *mantra sraṁ* is placed within a schematized lotus that is within a circle for this verse's meditation.



sraṁ

Verse Twenty-four

जगत् सूते धाता हरिवति रुद्रः क्षपयते
तिरस्कुर्वन्नेतत् स्वमपि वपुरीशस्तिरयति।
सदापूर्वः सर्वं तदिदमनुगृह्णाति च शिव-
स्तवाज्ञामालम्ब्य क्षणचलितयोर्भूलतिकयोः॥

*jagat sūte dhātā hariravati rudraḥ kṣapayate
tiraskurvannetat svampai vapurīśastirayati ।
sadāpūrvāḥ sarvaṁ tadidam anugrṇāti ca śivas-
tavājñāmālambya kṣaṇa calitayorbhrūlatikayoḥ ॥*

O Mother, Brahmā creates this world, Viṣṇu sustains it,
and Rudra dissolves all. Absorbing everything
in his own body, he veils even himself.
The supreme Śiva, who has *sadā*, the eternal,
for the prefix of his name, blesses the entire world process
by taking a hint from the momentary flickering
of your eyebrows, which resemble a tender creeper,
and carrying out your command.



The sun, rising above the horizon, brings day to the world. Consciousness awakening between the eyebrows brings the wakeful state to man. The day rouses all living beings to get up and enter into the scheduled program of the day. The wakeful state reminds the individual of the action of the previous day and urges him or her to schedule assignments and transact each one in an orderly manner. The architect of the universe is called Brahmā, the Viśvakarman (cosmic action agent). Wakeful consciousness is the assessor, the one who measures, classifies, structures, examines, and utilizes all the given data with the intention of actualizing each moment that is coming in a linear fashion. The seriousness of actualization compels the individual consciousness to focus on one central value at a time and to relate the precedent and the antecedent to the given central value. He is not Viśvakarman, the cosmic agent of action, but *viśva abhimānī*, the

reckoner of the given universe in a specific context. Passing moments are highly significant to the assessor. It is a tireless job. As soon as one is examined, judged, and its affectivity recorded, it is to be pushed into the realm of memory. Each day has its recurring chores. There is a beginning and end to the day's work program. There is a moral conscience accompanying the carrying out of these chores. Failure to carry out a command from the invisible, unknown dictator of life can cause anxiety, panic, and a sense of guilt. At the cosmic level, Brahmā carries out this role. At the individual level, transactional consciousness is responsible. What Brahmā is to the world, the transactional ego is to each of us.

The cosmos is a self-generating system with its own designs and ongoing programs. Considering the physical limitation of the individual, the assignment allotted to the generative light within is vast and complex. It has a vertical depth and horizontal extensions. This second principle of self-generation is, for the cosmos, Viṣṇu, and for the individual, *taijasa*, the principle of subjectivity. Even when the physical data is removed from sense accessibility, the image is held intact so that a continuity of experience can be maintained, both in its contiguity and progressive actualization. Even in the gross actual world where percept dominates, the *taijasa* has to supply prefabricated concepts. In another way, we can say that the drama of wakeful life is enacted on the stage of dream. Modern psychologists tire themselves out interpreting dreams in terms of the wakeful when it should be the other way around, that is, interpreting the wakeful as an actualization of dream.

We have now seen the correspondence between the cosmic Brahmā and Viṣṇu and the two personalized items of *viśva abhimānī* (the world assessor), and *taijasa* (the grand manipulator of dreams). Both the wakeful experience of gross objects and the dream experience of manipulated symbols structured out of memory fragments have to move, just like the still pictures of cinematic film. There is a forceful snatching away, both from the assessor and the fiction manipulator, of the themes in their hands. There is no clear demarcation between wakeful creation and its subjective continuation. But again and again a witnessing consciousness notices the disappearance of the theme that was holding the attention at a particular moment in time. At the cosmic level, the scenario changes. The starry heavens of the night are made to flee when the first news of the light of



Galaxy reproduction from the Hubble Atlas of Galaxies.

The galaxies of our physical world represent one pole of the cosmos that is controlled by Īśvara, whose mathematics and law regulate our worlds of actions and dreams. All of these micro- and macrocosmic worlds are animated by the "quivering eyebrows" of the Mother.

the rising sun flings its stone on the sultan's turret, as Omar Khayyam wrote. The sun that reigns supreme for nearly twelve hours is drowned in the depth of the ocean and the stars are beckoned back to the sky. It is as if there is a cosmic program of destruction, devastation, and transmutation going on at all times. It saddens us that each coming together ends in departure. This sadness of inevitable transmutation is poetically called Rudra. Rudra is derived from *rodana* (crying out or howling). In personal consciousness, the pain of leaving an enjoyable experience is mitigated with the inducement of sleep. A creeping myopia benumbs consciousness and dissolves it in the unconscious. At the cosmic level it is Rudra and at the personal level it is *avyākṛta*, the grand effacer of all distinct forms. There is no danger of destruction. There is only the hiding of all specific details. This is an act of *nigraha* (making it impossible to grasp).

These multifarious functions, both cosmic and psychological, could not happen with such precision and regularity without there being behind them all one supreme controller. The controller is Īśvara. Īśvara is mathematics, law, and the uncompromising executive function in and throughout the macrocosm and the microcosm. This controller Īśvara is the brightest and most independent light that shines as the all-witnessing president of consciousness. He is both Jiveśvara (the lord of the individual), and Parameśvara (the supreme lord of all). It is at their behest that Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra are deployed to play their games and to withdraw when necessary. The role of Īśvara is *tirodhāna*, the stage manager who decides when the curtain is to be dropped or raised.

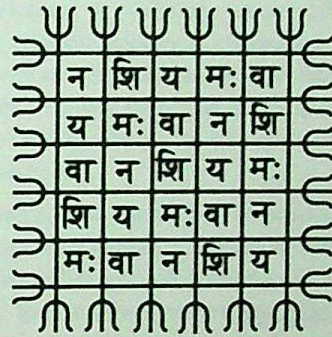
The entire game is played within the changeless being which has no reference to time or space, mass or motion, name or form, or even cause and effect. This changeless being is transcendence pure and simple. Personal consciousness is allowed to know the first three levels of transformation through perception, through imagination, and through deductive reasoning. *Tirodhāna* and transcendence are known only through superconscious imperience. Experiential aspects are called *anubhava* and imperiential identity is called *anubhūti*. The grand scheme of the *Saundaryalaharī* is to present transcendental immanence and immanent transcendence as a unitive single whole. Therefore, all the incidents that happen within a span of twenty-four hours in personal consciousness and



Samrāt Yantra. Designed by Mahārājā Sawai Jai Singh II, Jaipur, India, c. 1734.

These buildings were constructed as instruments to study the movements of planets and stars and as a yantra on a grand architectural scale. They served not only as tools of observation but as a means of relating humans to the larger movements of the cosmos.

in several cycles of the creation and dissolution of the cosmos always have an immanent programmer inseparably united with transcendence. That is figuratively mentioned in this verse as the time signal given by the quivering eyebrows of the Mother. She is also described in the previous verse as the enveloping magenta glory that pervades the Lord. *Na* stands for *Brahmā*, *maḥ* for *Viṣṇu*, *śi* for *Rudra*, *vā* for *Īśvara*, *ya* for *Sadāśiva*. When they are put together it is the Mother, *namaḥśivāya*. All of these *mantras* are meditated upon with the following checkerboard-patterned *yantra*.



na, maḥ, śi, vā, ya

Verse Twenty-five

त्रयाणां देवानां त्रिगुणजनितानां तव शिवे
 भवेत् पूजा पूजा तव चरणयोर्या विरचिता।
 तथा हि त्वत्पादोद्धनमणिपीठस्य निकटे
 स्थिता ह्येते शश्वन्मुकुलितकरोत्तंसमकुटाः॥

*trayāṇāṃ devānāṃ triguṇajanitānāṃ tava śive
 bhavet pūjā pūjā tava caranayoryā viracitā ।
 tathā hi tvatpādodghanamanipīṭhasya nikaṭe
 sthitā hyete śaśvanmukulitakarottam samakuṭāḥ ॥*

O Consort of Śiva, the three gods, who generate your triple nature modalities, what worship they offer to your twin feet, that worship is the worship indeed. Standing eternally beside the gem-decked footstool on which your feet rest, their hands are joined, bud-like, well above their crowns.



Verses 25-27 are to be taken together as a unit. In verse 25 the reference is to the cycle of daily life's functions and in verse 26 to its dissolution. The kind of worship that is examined in these two verses is restated in verse 27. In the *Saundaryalaharī* there is a special blend of the concepts of Vedānta and Tantra. In Vedānta the Absolute is pure existence, pure subsistence, and the unitive ground of all values: *sat*, *cit*, and *ānanda*. The relative or conditioned is composed of the triple modalities, *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. This is the unresolved duality of *puruṣa* and *prakṛti* that is postulated by the Sāṃkhyan school. The dichotomy persists in a disguised manner even in Śaṅkara's philosophy. In Tantra, the twin principles of Śiva and Śakti are unified into a single principle, giving primacy to Śakti in the form of the Supreme Mother. In that aspect the Mother is not *prakṛti*. Instead she becomes the most numinous central principle and the triple modalities of nature are assigned to the divinities of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Rudra.

In the present verse, these gods are said to be serving the purpose of the Divine Mother, standing at her footstool, ever ready to carry out all

her orders. This picturesque representation can benefit us only if we understand our daily life as a divine function. Whether we are sitting in meditation or performing a work, there is a constant numinous principle which is always shining within us. It is in the light of that unnameable pure being that everything is happening, and when we speak of the Mother our meditation should be in adoration of that absolute core of our being. This body of ours is the best instrument we have to carry out the divine scheme of life. As soon as we wake up, we are offering that body for the day's activities. All creative energy is channeled through our organs of action and no lethargy or hesitation to work is tolerated. This is the same as saying Brahṁā, the creative principle in us, is standing in adoration of the Absolute and carrying out his duties to the Supreme Mother who presides over our daily life.

The organs of perception, the organs of action, and the mind require, to carry out their respective duties, a consistent interest in the meaning of whatever is performed. What was left yesterday should find its continuation in today's work and then on into tomorrow's planning. Such alertness to recall the past and to actualize programs in the present can be poetically alluded to as the state of adoration in which Viṣṇu places himself. Viṣṇu's function can be compared to a computer ready to scan its memory loads and carry out commands. When thus viewed, Brahṁā and Viṣṇu are none other than the programing of the cosmic mind and the carrying out of its commands.

In daily life, the future is as important as the past and the present is always to be processed and stored for the future. This is done through a number of reductions of the gross into the subtle and the subtle into the causal. Everything is accounted for in order to provide a sense of interconnection. If Brahṁā and Viṣṇu are respectively treated as *sattva* and *rajas*, Rudra is of the nature of *tamas*. The role of *tamas* is in the unconscious and this role need not always be tragic. Soon after a thing is performed, it is removed from wakeful consciousness so that a new gestalt can be called up and the closed gestalts stored away. The past is like an oblivion which is continuously swallowing up the present. This is



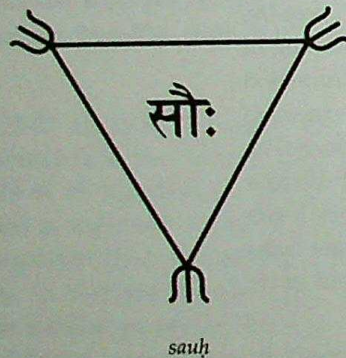
The Three Guṇas. Andrew Larkin, Charcoal on paper, America, 1989.

The throb of being resonants in the silence of nothingness while the goddess continues her endless series of becoming. Each of her manifestations is regulated by the three modulations of nature: sattva (pure transparency); rajas (kinetic dynamics); and tamas (a veiling obscurity).

happening every moment of our lives. It is to be considered as the duty performed by Rudra.

Instead of anthropomorphically conceiving gods and demi-urges, one can perform one's natural duties and it is already a worship of the proper kind. One's creativity, memory recall, and the ingesting of all ongoing experiences can be true worship without giving any religious coloration to it. Terms like *satcidānanda*, *sattva*, *rajas*, *tamas*, *Brahmā*, *Viṣṇu*, and *Rudra* are to be interpreted in terms of a dynamic consciousness of values. What is experienced in the wakeful, in the dream, and in the deep unconscious are complementary aspects of individual life and the same correlation is to be seen in a more elaborate manner in the cosmos. Every verse of the *Saundaryalaharī* can thus be understood as the cosmic phenomena presented in miniature form within the psyche. The cosmos is reciprocally an elaboration of the psyche.

Sauḥ is placed as the *mantra* with the following *yantra* for meditation.



Brahmā, Śiva and Viṣṇu Worship the goddess, from a Devī series, Basohi, India, c. 1660-70.

The three gods of the manifested world pay homage to the goddess who is seated on the lotus of realization. She holds the objects that indicate both her male and female sides: the trident, drum, and conch shell for Śiva, and the vīṇā, cymbals, and lotus for Śakti.

Verse Twenty-six

विरिञ्चिः पञ्चत्वं ब्रजति हरिराप्नोति विरतिम्।
विनाशं कीनाशो भजति धनदो याति निधनम्।
वितन्द्री माहेन्द्री विततिरपि संमीलित दृशा
महासंहारेऽस्मिन् विहरति सति त्वत्पतिरसौ॥

virīñciḥ pañcatvaṁ vrajati harirāpnoti viratim
vināśaṁ kīnāśo bhajati dhanado yāti nidhanam ।
vitandrī māhendrī vitatirapi saṁmīlita dṛśā
mahāsaṁhāre 'smin viharati sati tvatpatirasau ॥

Brahmā regains his quintuple nature, Viṣṇu withdraws from his interest, the annihilator meditates on death, the god of wealth also perishes; and in a special way the great Indra (along with the host of *manus*) keeps his eyes half-closed. In that time of final dissolution, O constant spouse of Śiva, your Lord alone sports.



The two counterparts of a knowledge situation are the knower and the known. A colored knowledge automatically presents a colored knower. When concentration is focused on an object, the subject also becomes tightened and the accompanying identity of the ego as knower becomes concretized. However, as one effortlessly withers off from active concentration, two simultaneous effacements happen, one on the objective side and the other on the subjective side. In the present meditation, both outer and inner knowledge and the knower are allowed to pale. If a picture is projected on a screen and then a more intense light is also allowed to fall there, the projected picture will disappear. Light and shadow taken together are the medium for visual projection. If there is no opacity that can be silhouetted by light, then forms are not highlighted. The meditation in this verse brings the meditator closer and closer to the source of illumination and being. The withering away of the creative principle, or rather the projective principle, of Brahmā is the

diving board from which the meditator plunges into the unique experience of unwinding individuation.

From a distance the moon looks very beautiful, yet a closer look shows ugly craters. The five elements which constitute the physical world of matter appear to be concrete because of the organization of the basic particle energy. In Vedānta the composition of matter is called *pañcīkaraṇa* (quintiplication). That is, each element is stabilized by combining the subtle *tanmātras* of all the other elements with it. *Tanmātra* means that which is measured by itself only. In other words, in the concrete, gross material of earth there are also the other four elements, water, fire, air, and *ākāśa*. When from the composition of an aggregate, the elements return to their primeval nature and there is no stuff of creation to sustain bodies, this is poetically referred to as the resolving of Brahmā into the constituents of quintiplication.

Two natural exercises in meditation which are given free to all sentient beings are deep sleep and death. Both silence the recall of memory. What disturbs the mind are the busy-bee-like thoughts that rake up memories of people, incidents, and pain-pleasure conditionings. It is cosmic memory that makes the planets follow the same orbit again and again. It is individual memory which recalls fixed concepts to identify percepts of identical nature. Here, in the meditation of this verse, memories are allowed to lie buried. The function of Viṣṇu ceases. Establishing concentration means that distracting memories vanish. In the final vanishing of memory, the Self forgets its agency of being the knower or doer or enjoyer. When one immerses oneself deeply into meditation, there is no memory of that person's body seated in a particular place. There is no recognition of anything that is happening around. Consequently, there is no registry of experience, nor the promptings to recall memory to associate with anything that is coming into mind. In fact, nothing comes. This is mentioned in the present verse as Viṣṇu withdrawing all interest from correlating percepts with concepts.

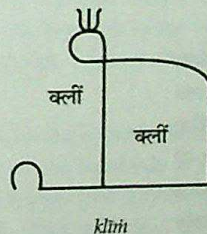
If a person passes away while in a deep sleep or coma, so far as consciousness is concerned there is no demarcation between life and death. In this ultimate merger, there is no need to label the dissolution as a death caused by this incident or that incident. It is said in this verse that the god of death has gone into a meditation on death: the rivers that enter the ocean fail to retain their identities after merging with water.

The outward pursuits of life are mainly to secure the means that can bring happiness. That happiness is nothing but a relative pleasure contrasted with pain. But when there is no action, no specific knowledge and no act of enjoyment, the means to attain happiness are no longer required. This is beautifully put in the phrase, "The god of wealth also perishes."

One opens one's eyes and looks at the objective world outside. One can also turn the eyes inward and recognize the knower. A third possibility is inertial darkness overpowering consciousness and sleeping like a log of wood. This is the common experience of every person: to be wakeful, to dream, or to sleep. In the present meditation, termed an ultimate meditation, one transcends both the sleeping and waking states. Narayana Guru describes it as remaining without sleeping and without waking yet stabilized in the pure state of consciousness through and through. Everything is negated. But even in the most obliterating negation, there is an is. Ultimately, this is, *tadeva sat*.

One looks on with wonder, one listens with wonder, one speaks with wonder. Even after seeing, listening, and speaking, the deepest mystery of the highest wonder remains unresolved.

This meditation uses the *mantra klīm* with the following *yantra*.



The Barcelona Series: Memory and Instinct, Larry Aleshire, found object collages, America, 1992.

A series of collages portraying various aspects of consciousness, with the two presented here focusing on memory and instinct.

Verse Twenty-seven

जपो जल्पः शिल्पं सकलमपि मुद्राविरचना
गतिः प्रादक्षिण्यक्रमणमशनाद्याहुतिविधिः।
प्रणामः संवेशः सुखमखिलमात्मार्पणदृशा
सपर्यापर्यायस्तव भवतु यन्मे विलसितम्॥

*japo jalpah śilpaṁ sakalamapi mudrā viracanā
gatiḥ prādakṣiṇyakramaṇamaśanādyā hutivīdhiḥ ।
praṇāmaḥ saṁveśaḥ sukhamakṣhīlamātmārpaṇadṛśā
saparyā paryāyastava bhavatu yanme vilasitam ॥*

May my mutterings be your incantations;
works of my hand, ritualistic gesture;
my movement, your circumambulation;
the partaking of food, offerings of consecration;
and lying down, prostration;
all enjoyments and whatever is seen in me,
may they be the synonyms of worship of you.



The cock crows, the cat mews, the dog barks, the lion roars, the donkey brays, and man speaks. All of these are creatures crawling on the surface of a mud ball called earth, one of the planets circling a small star called the sun, on the fringe of the Milky Way galaxy. No one even knows how many galaxies there are. So what does it matter what a certain creature, so infinitely small, does in a remote corner of the universe? Can any being ever conceive the totality of the source from which the universe is unfolding?

Yet man makes a variety of noises, and he has the ingenuity to classify them into names and verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Some words are adorable, holy, inspired, and revealed. Other words are for frequent use in the marketplace. Some others are even undignified, obscene, and used only by the vulgar. When the child pretends, it forgets it is pretending. Similarly, man creates make-believe gods, temples for such gods, and out of the few noises he can make he pretends to believe that some of them

are efficacious devices to glorify the Creator or Creatrice. He not only becomes serious in his mimickings of religion, he even becomes fanatical. Just as he names pots and pans, cats and dogs, he also names the unnameable. He fights over these names and kills his fellow men when there is disagreement in the names they use.

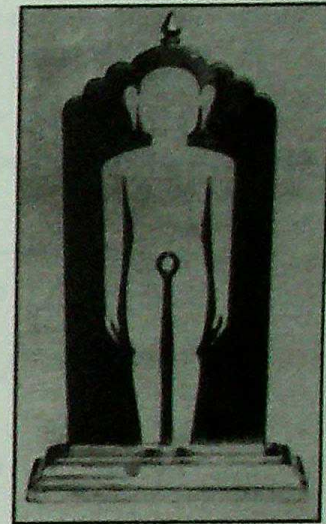
So in adoration, the devotee says:

O Supreme One, I do not know who you are. This voice of mine is a gift from you. I do not know by which tune I can propitiate you. Although I take pride in my articulation, it is just one of a multitude of sounds. My intention is to pray and to sing praises and songs of adoration, so whatever sound comes from me, please accept it. You are inconceivable.

Priests, shamans, magicians, witches, all have developed various rituals, and they believe that with their postures, gesticulations, and liturgies they are offering worship to you. I am too simple to understand all this. You have given me these hands and legs. Each day I move them in so many ways and accomplish action as dictated by needs. I do not know any other ritual. Should I be ritualistic? Then please accept every action of mine as a ritualistic gesture. I see people circumambulating as if you are a piece of stone and you are seated in a temple built by their hands. When you are omnipresent and you have no limits, how can I ever walk around you? With the two legs you have given, I move about a little. May that be my circumambulation.

It is ridiculous that I am expected to feed you. This world is yours. All elements in it are yours. This body is yours, these hands and legs are yours. How can I offer you anything? It is your decree that I should eat and drink, sleep and play, until this toy of personalized being perishes. So when I eat and drink may it please be considered as my offering to you.

Where are your feet? In which direction should I prostrate so that I can unmistakably place my forehead at your feet? I do not know. I do not know anything, so whenever I lie down, please consider that I am prostrating at your feet. Look at my wretched state. Even the "I" in me of which I am so proud is sportively placed in this person by you. It is a funny little device which is trying to put the whole in the part. You who see through all my mimickings and pretensions, please

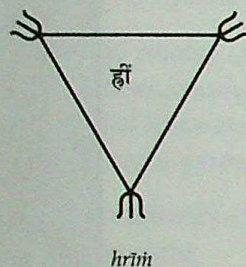


Jaina icon of the released spirit. Engraved Brass, Rajasthan, India, eighteenth century.

The hollow body of the liberated one, jina, allows the universal breath to pass through it unhindered by modulations or distortions.

give at least a little credit to my intentions. I am a gift from you. Please accept it back as a total surrender. Words fail me. What throbs here as the consciousness of this finite, helpless creature, let it be filled with an overwhelming sense of gratitude. I am yours. *Aum*.

Hrīm, this verse's *mantra*, is located within a triangle on its apex.



Verse Twenty-eight

सुधामप्यास्वाद्य प्रतिभयजरामृत्युहरिणीं
 विपद्यन्ते विश्वे विधिषतमखाद्या दिविषदः।
 करालं यत् क्ष्वेलं कबलितवतः कालकलना
 न शंभोस्तन्मूलं तव जननि ताटङ्कमहिमा॥

*sudhāmapyāsvādya pratibhaya jarā mṛtyu hariṇīm
 vipadyante viśve vidhiṣatamakhādya diviṣadaḥ ।
 kārāḷaṁ yat kṣvelaṁ kabalitavataḥ kālakalanā
 na śambhōstanmūlaṁ tava janani tāṭaṅkamahimā ॥*

Even though Brahmā, Indra, and the other gods
 have drunk *amṛta*, the elixir of immortality,
 to everyone in the world death comes.
 But to Śambhu, *Śiva*, who has drunk the most terrible poison,
kālakūṭa, no extinction comes. O Mother,
 this speaks of the greatness of your ear ornaments, *tāṭaṅka*.



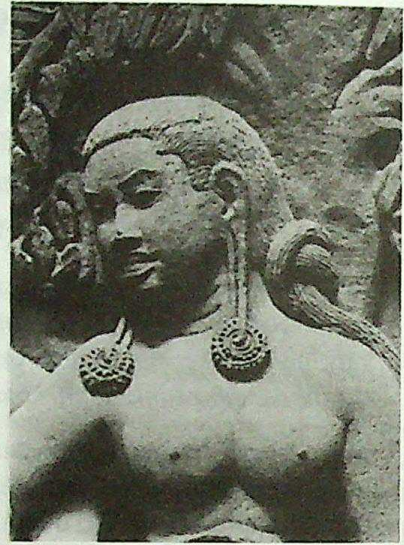
Time ticks. In the ticking of each second, time is coming, time is, and time is going. When it is gone, another second is coming. Like the sequential movement of time, the mind continues to recognize its expectation, the actualization of the expectation, and the memory of what is gone. The entire wakeful consciousness is marked by the movement of time. A busy person again and again looks at his watch and curses the passing of time. A person in boredom also looks at time and complains that it is dragging. A joyous person forgets time. For every person, there is a fresh beginning of the day and a beautiful slipping into sleep. Thus, time can be experienced as this passing moment of this day that is being lived. Time begins from the moment of birth and it comes to a close as a conscious experience when life terminates. In spite of the many intermittent lapses of consciousness, time is not allowed to fragment the contiguity of life. Desires are not fulfilled in a single second, not even in a single day. The

full unfoldment and fruition of an individual takes an entire lifespan to come to its conclusion or fulfillment.

For this reason, every person is trying to immortalize the finest blossoms of his or her mind. Everyone wants to catch the attention of other people. All want to proclaim to the world that they exist. They are photographed. Names are advertized and voices cultured to make them attractive. The desire not to leave the arena of life, to be here, if possible in youthful persistence, is the ambition of all. In Indian mythology, this ambition is described as the churning of the milk ocean and the partaking of *amṛta* (the elixir of immortality). This churning process is going on even today: when one's mind is applied so as to achieve a clear, crystal vision of hidden secrets, it is an act of churning.

The triple modalities of nature are clarity, kinetics, and opacity. In Sanskrit, these triple modalities are *sattva*, *rajas*, and *tamas*. *Sattva* is considered white, *rajas* is red, and *tamas* is black. These are inseparables. Gaining clarity helps one find a way out of the traps of life. With clear notions we have advanced science and through hard work we have advanced technology. Though we may have progressed on the plus side of human achievement, *tamas* has also unfortunately appeared. In the myth of the churning of the ocean, the negative pole is characterized as the world-annihilating poison. In fact, the present day is facing that negative pole with a shivering spine. From the churning of intellect we have received many boons, but now we are facing an almost imminent devastation of life on earth. Is there a way out? The search so far has only been in the analytical field of the phenomenon. In the mad gold rush for success, the search has gone excentric. Rediscovering the center is the only correction. This correction can be achieved by moving the search into the vertical ascendant.

It is a pity that we do not see what is obvious. Even in the little sharing and care we give to those who are closest and dearest to us, including our pets and the plants of our gardens, the health of the good earth shows us the unmistakable lesson of the interconnectedness of all and the purposeful continuation of everything in the world. If only we ask, "Whose purpose?" Then we can open our eyes to the hidden dimension of life. The far-off star and the cells of our bodies enter into a new alliance. The entire function of the universe becomes grounded in



Detail of a carved stone frieze. Banteay Srei, Cambodia, late tenth century.

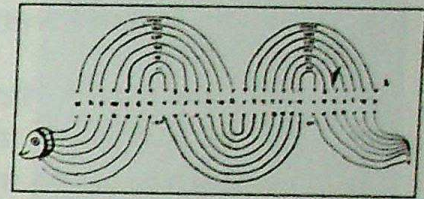
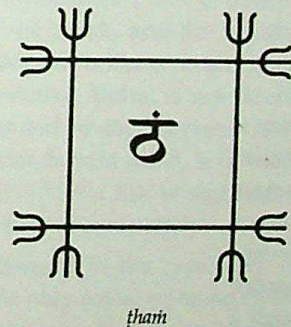
An elongated earlobe and an ornate ear ornament were long considered in Indian aesthetics as a sign of beauty and refinement in women.

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the timeless. This is glorified in the present verse as the Supreme Lord, *Śiva*, whom fire does not burn and poison does not kill. If there is no ground, there also cannot be any superimposition. Taking away the ground is widowing the performance. In the Indian tradition, the removal of a woman's ear ornament (*tāṭaṅkam*), is the sign of her becoming a widow. The world-perpetuating process is not widowed in spite of the opening and closing of several cycles. That same unassailable reality is also the ground of our being.

We have to touch both the transactional verity of life and its transcendental sublimity. At the periphery are our desires or volitions and our actions. Desire comes from incipient memories, Viṣṇu; the volition of creation from Brahmā; performance from Indra. All propitiations are given only to our desire, our will and our actions. By shifting it all to the overseeing noumenon and its overruling universal will, our spiritual discipline becomes complete. Then the purposiveness of our life will not be widowed.

The *mantra* *ḥarīṁ* is located within the *yantra* for meditation.



River Snake of Time from a Jaina manuscript.
Ink on paper, India, nineteenth century.

The eternal recurrence of the sevenfold divisions of the universe as a cosmic river of time is here given form as a snake, symbol of fecundity.

Verse Twenty-nine

किरीटं वैरिञ्चं परिहर पुरः कैटभभिदः

कठोरे कोटीरे स्खलसि जहि जम्भारिमकुटम्।

प्रणम्रेष्वेतेषु प्रसभमुपयातस्य भवनं

भवस्याभ्युत्थाने तव परिजनोक्तिर्विजयते॥

*kirīṭam vairiñcam parihara puraḥ kaiṭabhabhidaḥ
kaṭhore koṭīre skhalasi jahi jambhārimakuṭam ।
praṇamreṣveteṣu prasabhamupayā tasya bhavanam
bhavasyābhyuthāne tava parijanoktirvijayate ॥*

"Restore Brahmā's crown;

Before you is Viṣṇu's hard headgear

(you may hit it inadvertently);

Save Indra's crown."

When they are all bowing before you, and you suddenly
rise to face your Lord who is coming home,
these words of your retinue ring supreme.



That which happened yesterday has gone to sleep. Today it resurrects with fresh vigor and new designs. Even the tiniest seed of the weakest grass blown away in the wind seizes the slightest opportunity to sprout and once again become a plant. This is the scheme of life that is deposited in every seeded form. The fecund power of life is difficult to suppress. The tendril of a root looks so soft, and yet with patience it can penetrate through a rock to reach a source of water. This is the domain of Viṣṇu. Everything is sustained through an innate arrangement of exploding dynamics, and thus Viṣṇu is the main programmer of life. No one has ever succeeded in pinpointing the beginning of life. Does it begin with the molecular arrangement of atoms, or the formation of crystals, or with virus and bacteria? All these come in one line. From the initial arrangement of sub-atomic particles to the strategic deployment of missiles by modern military officials, the vast domain of Viṣṇu is spread out. From the fragrance of

the earth to the music of the spheres, Viṣṇu has a wide variety of choices with which to induce interest. Yet in spite of such supremacy over the entire domain of nature, he is at the feet of the Supreme Mother.

Incipient universal memory operates through the creative urge and the intelligence of individual beings. On waking up in the morning, the mind runs back and forth between yesterday and tomorrow and creates scheme after scheme to weave all the details of today into reality. This is Brahmā, the creator, busy in the anthill, the beehive, in the nests of birds, undersea with oceanic life, and in the world of humans where everyone is called to attention for the day's routine. Brahmā is the great rouser, the awakener, and the inducer, and he is the manager of this body-mind complex. His entire service is dedicated to the Supreme Mother. He is at her behest and can accomplish his actions only through the approval of the Supreme One. To receive her assent he is in constant prostration.

All transactional programs commence with the turning of the senses of perception toward objects of interest. The senses are the *indriyas*, but without the mind the senses cannot operate. Mind is Indra. The sensory system brings the input, and the output is through the motor system. Transportation, communication, and productive performances are the business of the legs, the hands, and the mouth or tongue. These are the executive seats of Indra. He is like a project manager. Man is prone to err because his chief executive, Indra, is not flawless and lives in constant fear of being reprimanded by the Supreme. The crown of Indra, which is none other than our flamboyant mind, is in constant danger. That danger comes when an individual's life is suddenly pulled up to meet the requirements of spiritual emancipation.

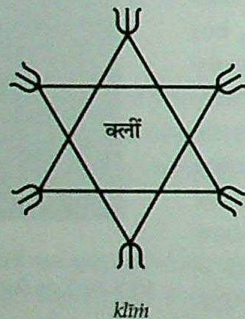
While being immersed in the repetitive, routine chores of life, a glance from the Divine may rouse a person to look into the very purpose for which he or she has come to this world. Then that person is assailed by questions such as: "Who am I?", "What is this world?", "Why am I here?" Plato alludes to this in his simile of the cave. Countless generations of prisoners are in a dungeon, where everyone mistakes shadows for the real. Then one person is assailed by doubt. On facing his own doubt, he realizes the shackles of phenomenality. When placed in such a dire situation, he tries to turn 180°. This is metaphorically given in this verse as the Supreme Mother rising from her seat to meet her Lord. That



The goddess Pārvati. Carved stone, style of the tenth century, found in Champa (ancient Vietnam).

arising disrupts all the orderly arrangements of socially-oriented programs. Everything becomes disarranged. Then the mind turns away and walks in a new direction, like the young prince Siddhārtha sneaking out of his wife's chamber, leaving her and their newborn babe to their own destiny, and crossing the borders of his country as a lone pilgrim in search of truth. This is like trampling under one's foot the crowns of Brahmā, Viṣṇu, and Indra.

When a person is about to make a spiritual turn, the entire world tries to dissuade him or her by asking for the duties and obligations of society to be fulfilled. The picturesque scene caricatured in this verse is to be seen in our own personal experiences of turmoil when we are touched by the most profound questions of a spiritual quest. As the aspirant meditates on this scene, the *mantra klīm* is placed within the following *yantra* of two overlaid triangles.



Verse Thirty

स्वदेहोद्भूताभिर्घृणिभिरणिमाद्याभिरभितः
निषेव्ये नित्ये त्वामहमिति सदा भावयति यः।
किमाश्चर्यं तस्य त्रिनयनसमृद्धिं तृणयतो
महासंवर्ताग्निर्विरचयति नीराजनविधिम्॥

*svadehodbhūtābhirghṛṇibhiranimādyābhirabhitah
niṣevye nitye tvāmahamiti sadā bhāvayati yah ।
kimāścaryam tasya trinayanasamṛddhim tṛṇayato
mahāsanvartāgnirviracayati nīrājanavidhim ॥*

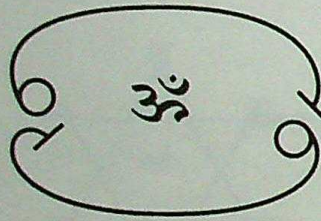
O Eternal One, attended on by the rays emanating
from your body, such as invisibility (*aṇimā*)
and such other psychic powers!
For one who contemplated always, "You are me,"
what surprise is there that even all the benefits of the three-eyed
are treated by him as of no consequence,
and that the fire of doom should perform
for him the light-waving rite?



The angry father of a young boy called Naciketas threatened to give him away to Death. That threat aroused the interest of young Naciketas. Instead of running away from Death like a fugitive, he walked into the very den of Death with the intention of exacting from him the secret of dying. Death thought of persuading the young seeker to give up his search and live off all the bounties of this world: the priceless jewels of royalty, a harem of beautiful girls, all the things that tempt a person. On hearing the promise of these boons, Naciketas suggested that if the items were of such high value, Death himself could keep them. He, Naciketas, prized the knowing of truth more than riches. Satan paraded before Jesus with all the world's temptations. Jesus, however, did not see any value in these pleasures because in his heart he had one conviction, "I am that I am." At the hour of the awakening of Gautama into Buddhahood, Māra appeared before

him with ten perceptual hallucinations and ten conceptual temptations, *rūparāga* and *arūparāga*, respectively. The Lord of Blessedness only smiled at the folly of Māra.

The *yogī* walking toward his own aloneness is in no need of proving himself to anyone. So Patañjali dismisses the eight psychic powers called *siddhis*. What truly matters is the conviction, "I am that I am." Once a Zen master was asked the difference between the Buddha and an ignorant person. The master said, "An ignorant man recognizes a tree to be a tree, and the Buddha recognizes a tree to be a tree." There is no formal distinction. But there is a vast sea of difference between the experiences of, "I am" and, "I am that I am." To avoid confusion, in this verse the meditation recommended is, "You are me, O Eternal One, *nitya*." The *mantra aum* is then placed within the *yantra* below for further contemplation.



aum



Details from The Three Guṇas, Andrew Larkin, charcoal on paper, America, 1989.

The growing tree with its widespread branches and deeply sunk roots epitomizes the transcendent immanence of life. Like that, a yogī who is fully cognizant can confidently assert, "I am that I am."

Verse Thirty-one

चतुःषष्ट्या तन्त्रैः सकलमतिसन्धाय भुवनं
स्थितस्तत्तत्सिद्धिप्रसवपरतन्त्रैः पशुपतिः।
पुनस्त्वन्निर्वन्धादखिलपुरुषार्थैकघटना-
स्वतन्त्रं ते तन्त्रं क्षितितलमवातीतरदिदम्॥

*catuṣṣaṣṭyā tantraiḥ sakalamatisandhāya bhuvanam
sthitas tat-tat-siddhi-prasava-para-tantraiḥ paśupatiḥ ।
punastvannirbandhādakhilapuruṣārthaikaghaṭanā-
svatantram te tantram kṣititalamavāti taradidam ॥*

By sixty-four *tantras*, of which each is only capable
of generating its own overt function, the lord of beings
decreed the function of the entire world and remained unmoved.
Again by your insistence, he brought down to this world
your *tantra*, which can comprehensively achieve
the unified goal of all *tantras*.



Man is basically a beast. Like other animals, he engages in activities, eats, mates, idles away his time, and goes to sleep. Three states of consciousness that are predominant in all animals are the wakeful, the dream, and deep sleep. Man is also capable of entering into a fourth state of consciousness, the transcendent. The entire consciousness of man falls in four quarters: the wakeful (*jāgrat*), dream (*svapna*), deep sleep (*susupti*), and transcendence (*turiya*). These states are governed by the laws of the universe.

From atomic formations to galactic structures, the quality of composition varies according to the quantitative assemblage of the constituents of each composition. The nature of an item is decided by its innate constitution. That nature is called *dharma*. Through several generations of trial and error, search and experimentation, man discovered the *dharma* or nature of his own body-mind complex and of all the other bodies with which he transacts. A code of conduct has evolved as to how he can harmoniously deal with everything in this world, either at the

physical level, the vital level, or the spiritual level. Thus, in the course of time, humankind became wise enough to have the *dharma* of understanding the innate nature of things and to pursue the purpose of his life.

Each state of consciousness has its own program for humans. The individual goes from situation to situation, with each situation being a new confrontation, a new challenge, a new mystery, and a new riddle. To resolve the situation, the aspirant should understand its meaning. The search for meaning (*artha*) is inevitable in every given situation. Only in accordance with the meaning of a situation can one decide what action is desirable and what action is not. An action is a *karma*. The inducement for action comes from a desire (*kāma*). The appropriateness of a desire depends on its validity in a certain situation. Thus, *dharma*, *artha*, and *kāma* go hand in hand.

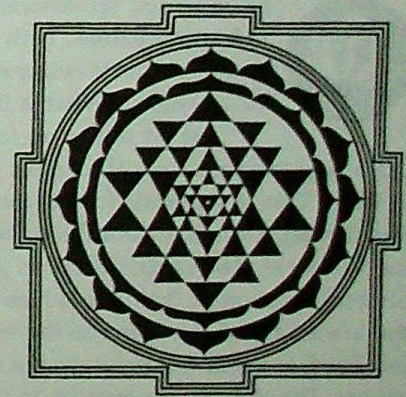
In all these three states, it is the general consciousness of a person that is animated and that undergoes modifications (*vyttis*). Unmodified pure consciousness belongs to the fourth category, *mokṣa*. Even in the case of people who do not aspire to transcendental states, a certain amount of transcendence is immanent in their triple states of consciousness. Thus all are living within the fourfold division of consciousness. At an animal level, a person is compelled to act according to his animal instinct. A human being who has had no chance to be disciplined in a society will show the same behavior as a wild animal. The Maugli, or jungle man, is an example. Here a person has no conscious or purposive planning. He is at the mercy of nature's devices. Only when a person frees himself or herself from the wild dictates of animal nature does he or she enjoy the freedom of planning life and raising his or her consciousness to the higher level that can bring ultimate freedom. Therefore, *tantra* can be called *svatantra*, which is operating one's self in absolute freedom. *Paratantra*, on the other hand, is acting according to another's wish, compulsively or under duress.

When we look at the evolutionary history of living beings, for millions of years the actions of humans were dictated by their biological needs. This is referred to in this verse as the lord of beings assigning to every species its own natural function and remaining as an unmoved mover. Even in man's present state, there are countless millions who have no

real value orientation. They live as opportunities lead them from day-to-day. Most people are even engaged in activities which have no resonance with their aptitudes. The mind desires one thing and the body is bartered to someone to do what one does not like. This is a clear case of living in *paratantra*. The Supreme Mother is presented in this verse as the voice of insistence to change the quality of life away from the sad state where we are riveted to the compulsiveness of blind nature. She wants to induce in her creatures an interest that will transport them to the highest vision.

Life is paradoxically placed between two values, necessity and freedom. Bread symbolizes necessity. The Self delighting in the Self is the sign of freedom. Some people do not aspire to become free. They resign themselves to fate and live in slavery. This absolute negation of a freedom goal in their lives makes them wretched, and they are called *śūdras*. There are others who secure a certain amount of relativistic freedom by using the cunning of their minds. They give primacy to the means by which freedom can be bought and these people are called *vaiśyas* (traders). Calculative assessment is their main mode of behavior. There are others who gain relatively more freedom by becoming defenders of everyone's freedom (*kṣatriyas*). Then there are those who, with wisdom, minimize their desires. They maximize their freedom so as to go again and again to the transcendent heights of spiritual delight. From there one can go into absolute freedom. The Mother is showing to her votaries the final liberation of the soul. It is this insistence, which is like a compulsion, that cancels away blind compulsion and leads to transcendence.

Even when countless millions do not look far beyond their immediate world and live only in accordance with their animal instincts, for those who are spiritually inclined there is a way. That way is referred to as the Supreme Mother's *tantra*, which comprehensively unites in it all the four goals of man: knowing the nature of all, *dharma*; understanding the meaning of all, *artha*; desiring the most desirable, *kāma*; and liberating oneself into absolute freedom, *mokṣa*. *Śrīvidyā*, which is given in verse 22, where the great dictum *tat tvam asi* (That thou art) is implied is the *tantra* again alluded to here. The highest knowledge is the knowledge that frees. Know and be free.



Śricakra. Traditional Tantric yantra rendered by Andrew Larkin, acrylic on paper, 1991.

Verse Thirty-two

शिवः शक्तिः कामः क्षितिरथ रविः शीतकिरणः

स्मरो हंसः शक्रस्तदनु च परामारहरयः।

अमी हल्लेखाभिस्तिसृभिरवसानेषु घटिताः

भजन्ते वर्णास्ते तव जननि नामावयवताम्॥

*śivaḥ śaktiḥ kāmāḥ kṣitiratha raviḥ śitakiraṇaḥ
smaro haṁsaḥ śakraṣṭadanu ca parāmāraharayaḥ ।
amī hṛllekhābhīstisṛbhiravasāneṣu ghaṭitāḥ
bhajānte varṇāste tava janai nāmāvayavatām ॥*

Śiva, Śakti, Kāma, Kṣiti, then Ravi, Śitakiraṇa, Smara, Haṁsa, Śakra, and after them, Para and Mārahara; These, when completed, with the three syllables hrīmī at their respective termination, as letters become the components of your name, O Mother.



All inquiries, remembrances, judgments, resolutions to act, and appreciations, both positive and negative, are evoked by an irrefutable beingness. This is the starting point. Before the question, "What is this?" is framed, nothing is known.

"It" has no name, no form. "It" does not provoke. "It" is like a beginningless state of absolute peace. "It" is *śivam*, pure beingness in itself. This is the basic foundation or *mūlādhāra* (*mūla*, basic; *ādhāra*, foundation). *Yogīs* represent the *mūlādhāra* physically at the lower tip of the vertebrae. The central nervous system is mainly positioned as the cerebral function of the brain which continues in the vertebrae. If from the lowest tip of the spine to the crown of the head a vertical line is imagined, at the lowest point we can mark the alpha and at the crown the omega. The alpha is the state of one's own being.

The fire in wood does not show itself until it starts burning. Like the conflagration of a log, life is a burning process in us. Latent energy becomes actualized. In other words, within the state of being the process of becoming is initiated. Becoming is not an outside being, it is not other

than being. *Śakti* operates: it is a process, it becomes affective. The flow of energy, whether vitalistic or psychic, is directed to accomplish a certain effect. It is as if a wish is materializing into action. That is *kāma*, which is essentially the dynamic to change one state into another. It is the transformation of a seed into a plant, a plant into a flowering state, a flowering plant into a fruiting plant, and fruits into a seed distribution system. Thus, purposive transformations follow one after another. This process can be seen in its most manifested state on the earth on which we live. On earth nothing remains unchanged or unchangeable. Hence, in Sanskrit, the earth is called *kṣiti*. *Kṣiti* means that which deteriorates. *Śiva*, *Śakti*, *kāma*, and *kṣiti* are respectively symbolized with the Sanskrit letters *ka*, *e*, *ī*, and *la* in the synergic center of the *mūlādhāra*. The flame of life springs up from this center, and the meditator postulates this region as the very beginning of creation so far as his or her personal consciousness is concerned. From the most imperishable Being to the most perishable earth, the theme of individuation is spread out as *Śiva*, pure Being; *Śakti*, procreative becoming; *kāma*, the desire to formulate; and *kṣiti*, actualizing transformation at the physical level. Thus pure spirit and gross physical matter are interlinked.

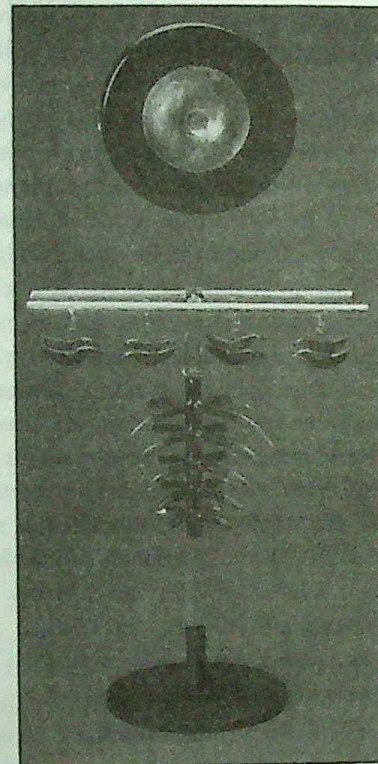
The release of energy is coupled with a desire-filled directive. In our world experience, the most pronounced elements are the form that we see and the name by which we recognize it. Form is a limitation in the phenomena of light and name is a sound token produced by vocal notes and pitches. Light as such has no form. Sound as such has no form. The primeval being, *Śiva*, can be meditated on as the all-filling light in which there is no flaw of any shade. *Śiva* can also be meditated upon as an all-filling sound which is beyond the scope of being heard. There light and sound are not two. This unity can be heard in the octave and can be seen in the spectrum: seven sounds and seven colors, two complementary aspects of primeval energy. In the process of individuation, the desire grows to see oneself and everything that surrounds that self in colorful forms and aesthetically patterned designs. Everything visualized is also spoken of and sung about. In human consciousness the region of sound is more pronounced than the visual region and has deeper significance. There are many musical sounds that can be heard but cannot be drawn or written. Yet, whether it is a jubilation of color or sound, an expression which is joyous and gladdens the heart where all shades of emotion are felt. The

desire within a person's heart flowers forth as the continuous search to enjoy. That quest is unbroken. It is *anāhata* (the heart) which is the second region of meditation.

One wants to see vividly in the bright light of the sun. But we cannot reach a thing in its absolute state. Sunlight can only be mirrored and cause a corresponding image in the mind. There is a one-to-one correspondence between what is illuminated and what is perceived. What is illuminated is the presentative. What is perceived is the representative. They are like the sun and the moon. The sun is self-luminous while the moon has no light. Yet the moon shines because of the reflected light of the sun. This is like *Śiva* and *Śakti*. Without the sun's light, the moon cannot be seen, but for a person to know anything he has to know it from the moon of his mind, from the reflected images which correspond to his perception. Images formed in the mind do not remain independent. Many images are put together to make a meaningful ensemble. By a process of the recall of all relevant memories the mind is feeding itself with appropriate *gestalts*. Like the sun and moon, illumination and reflection, there has to be a recalled image of memory. This is called *smara*. There can be 1,000 associated ideas; out of that only the most relevant one should be taken to understand and appreciate what is going on from moment to moment.

Memory is to be followed by discrimination. The discriminating power of a wise person is symbolized as a swan (*haṁsa*). Ultimately, what is seen or heard, touched, tasted, smelled, or identified through memory and properly discriminated should become a proper object with which to work. Action becomes imperative. Action is attributed to Indra. Thus in the heart the meditator postulates *ravi* (sun); *śītakiraṇa* (moon); *Smara* (the desire-generating god of recall); *haṁsa* (the power of discriminating truth from untruth); and *Śakra* or Indra (the god of action). They are represented with the syllables *ha, sa, ka, ha, la*.

Life is reaching forward from the alpha of its origination to the omega of its highest realization. The meditator has gone from the *mūlādhāra* to the *anāhata* (heart center). Now he ascends to the *ājñā cakra* (region between the two eyebrows). One who makes spiritual inquiry from the base foundation of the *mūlādhāra* and rises to the actual living situation appreciated in the heart does not want to lose his search in the mirages of experiences that are colorful, musical, and otherwise aesthetically



Carroza Solar (Solar Chariot), Susan Plum, blown and lampwork glass, America, 1991.

enjoyable. He desires to go beyond all these so he postulates the *ājñā*, where, in transcendence or *parā*, he has full control of consciousness. To go from a here-and-now ontological situation to the ever-and-all-filling, one cannot leap as one likes. There are many obligations, many memories, and many desires that are holding on to the individuated consciousness. In the light of being, the process of becoming is to be transmuted into its original state of pure being again. The destroyer of hallucinative impulses is meditated on in the *ājñā*, which is situated between the two physical eyes of perception. In other words, the meditator gives up his dependency on the eyes that are looking outward to objects of interest and in their place locates the third eye by which alone the eternal can be envisioned. *Parā* and *mārahara* go together. The certitude of untruth brings the certitude of truth. The Supreme is realized both as what it is and what it is not. These three principles are located in the *ājñā* with the symbols *sa*, *ka*, and *la*.

To these three sets of syllables posited at the *mūlādhāra*, at the *anāhata* and at the *ājñā*, that is, at the tip of the spine, the heart center, and the point between the brows, the *mantra hrīṁ* is added. At the *mūlādhāra* it is *ka, e, i, la, hrīṁ*. At the *anāhata* it is *ha, sa, ka, ha, la, hrīṁ*. At the *ājñā* it is *sa, ka, la, hrīṁ*.

Verse Thirty-three

स्मरं योनिं लक्ष्मीं त्रितयमिदमादौ तव मनो-
निधायैके नित्ये निरवधिमहाभोगरसिकाः।
भजन्ति त्वां चिन्तामणिगुणनिबद्धाक्षवल्याः
शिवाग्रौ जुहन्तः सुरभिघृतधाराहुतिशतैः॥

*smaraṇi yoniṁ lakṣmīṁ tritayamidamādaṁ tava manor-
nidhāyaike nitye niravadhi-mahābhogarasikāḥ ।
bhajanti tvāṁ cintāmaṇi-guṇanibaddhākṣavalayāḥ
śivāgnau juhvantaḥ surabhi-ghṛta-dhārāhutīśataiḥ ॥*

Smara, Yoni, Lakṣmī, prefixing these triads (*aiṁ, hrīm, śrīm*)
to your *mantra*, O lone and eternal One,
innumerable enjoyers of great ecstasy worship you,
telling rosary stones of perfect reasoning,
ever-sacrificing into the fire of Śiva with hundreds of oblations
from the celestial wish-fulfilling cow, Surabhi,
streams of clarified butter.



Man seeks happiness. There is a happiness identical with sensual pleasures. There is a happiness in the intelligent appreciation of correct values, tastefully cultivated. There is also the very rare happiness of transcendence. The lowest pleasures of indulgence lead man to disease (*roga*). Intelligent appreciation brings *bhoga*, an exceedingly pleasurable state. The transcending of pleasures at a gross level and the turning of that energy to the attainment of oneness with the Supreme leads one to perfection and unexpended joy. That is *yoga*. All religions have the concept of a heaven or paradise and a hell or world of miseries. Apart from hell and heaven there is a third possibility, that is, freedom from all relativistic conditioning. That is called liberation, emancipation, or aloneness.

In the human body, there are three main centers of experiencing enjoyment. The lowest is the genital area where one enjoys sexual orgasmic pleasures. The middle region of the heart is another center of great

enjoyment. The subtle and sublime aspects of love, compassion, and overwhelming appreciations of beauty are in this region. The topmost region is in the mind where one enjoys the reduction of both the gross and subtle into the appreciation of first principles. Man is both an animal and a god. His main pursuit is after pleasure and the means by which pleasure can be obtained. Most people confuse the means of pleasure with pleasure itself. With wealth one can purchase many pleasures, and to secure pleasures at a future date man hordes wealth. When one goes on hoarding riches, the means transform into an end. In this triangular pursuit three principles are involved: erotics, riches, and the constant remembrance of both. The main programmer of the mind is its preconditionings, which are experienced as a remembrance, *smara*. In the region of the eye one remembers the previous experiencing of beauty. This is followed by a craving to have the repeated enjoyment of what was previously pleasing. The same is true of all the senses and their perceptual enjoyments.

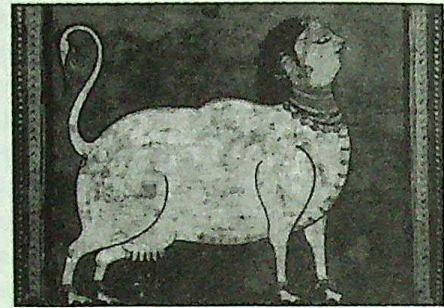
The only organ of action which has similar cravings is the genitals. Before maturity comes, erotic pleasure remains an experience of tactual rapture. The first pleasures of a child are sucking the nipple of its mother's breast and excreting. Afterwards oral erotics and anal erotics become concentrated in the genitals. The anguish and tribulation of adolescence are known to all people. In animals other than humans, sexual pleasures are limited and controlled by natural instinct. Man, however, is the one animal to whom the freedom of sexual pleasure is given to be used at his discretion. Some indulge, others inhibit, and a few intelligently restrain.

In the present verse, we are not considering the *yogī* of perfection but a *bhogī* who intelligently restrains and sublimates his instinctive urges so that he can be promoted later to the path of higher union. The *yogī* sits firm on the seat of discipline and looks at his own *svādhiṣṭhāna*, the area where generative pleasures seek overt expression. Three *mantras* are located here. These are three seed *mantras*: *smara* (*kāmarāja bija aīm*); *yonī* (*bhuvaneśvarībija hrīm*); and *lakṣmī* (*śrībija śrīm*). *Bhū* is to produce. Some of the lower beings lay 1,000 eggs, and even a pig may give birth to a score of litters. The human female mostly begets one child at a time, on rare occasions two, three or even four. Month after month the woman is prepared to conceive until fertilization actually happens. Even though rhythms occur in men as well, very few of them are mindful of their sexual rhythms. In most

men, sexuality is so chaotic that the urge to impregnate can come at any time. Thus Yoni, the home of Bhuvaneśvari, is always interested in procreating. Sight, voice, touch, smell are all reminders to have access to the beloved and Smara or remembrance plays a dynamic role. One has to be attractive to be appreciated by one's mate. For that, one aspires to be graceful and Lakṣmī is sought.

The meditator has two choices. One is to get up from his seat and seek an outlet for his sexual urges. The pressure for that can be so intense that a man may even risk his life, riches, and reputation and go amuck and rape. The other possibility is for the meditator to sit firmly on his seat with the resolve not to physically indulge but to still enjoy the pleasure of union by bringing the ruling principle of his heart into his *yonī*. That means a coalescence is made of the heart region and the genital. This is mainly accomplished by rising from the genital region to the heart region and generating beauty, goodness, and love through the subtle pleasures of life. There can even be overt meditations such as raising a garden of flowers, composing a beautiful poem, creating art forms, or entering into ennobling conversations with a loveable person and generating inspirational ideas.

To raise the creative energies from the genitals to the heart, the head also cooperates. There is one danger in Smara and Lakṣmī frequenting the *yonī*, the fire of Śiva is there. If the fire of Śiva is not to burn away Smara and Lakṣmī, that fire should be made into a fire of oblation. The cream of the values of the heart should be turned into the ghee of offering. This verse refers to hundreds of oblations, made with the clarified butter of Surabhi, a mythical cow who can fulfill all desires. Here the meditator departs from the ontological to the nominal. A great poet like Kālidāsa is an example of one who rejoices in the most intense form of sublime erotics. All the main moods of life, *rasas*, are creatively brought out in his play *Śakuntalā*. The attraction of the beautiful, the pangs of love, consummation and pregnancy, faithlessness of the lover, rejection and frustration, childbirth and fulfillment, reunion and contentment, and the transcendent state of the peace of the hermits: all are picturesquely produced by Kālidāsa, sitting on the seat of his meditation. A reader passes through this without actually indulging in anything. This is how *cintāmaṇi* (the pearl of perfect reasoning) is brought to bear upon the love to create.

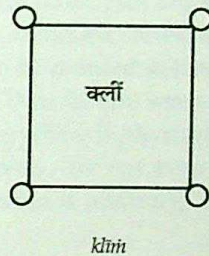


Kāma Dhenu (the Fulfiller of Wishes). Painted wooden manuscript, India, eighteenth century.

According to Hindu mythology, the wish-fulfilling cow emerged from the ocean of milk that was churned by the gods and the demons in their search for the elixir of immortality. The cow with full udders is an auspicious symbol of prosperity.

Thus *brahmāgni* of the brain region, *viṣṇuagni* of the heart region, and *śivāgni* of the genital region are all brought together. This is not the highest level but the next closest one. It is customary in the wisdom texts of India that after presenting a lesson of the highest attainment, a following one that is second best is given as an alternative. There is an earthly eroticism that pulls one down to the chaos and misery of gross indulgence. And there is a heavenly eros that brings our minds to the portals of a more subtle and deeper appreciation. From here, there is only one step further to go into the transcendence described in the previous verse. *Aim, hrīm, śrīm*.

Klīm, within the square *yantra* below, is the *mantra*.



Verse Thirty-four

शरीरं त्वं शंभोः शशिमिहिरवक्षोरुहयुगं
तवात्मानं मन्ये भगवति नवात्मानमनघम्।
अतः शेषः शेषीत्ययमुभयसाधारणतया
स्थितः संबन्धो वां समरसपरानन्दपरयोः॥

*śarīraṁ tvaṁ śambhoḥ śaśimihira vakṣoruhayugam
tavātmānaṁ manye bhagavati navātmānamanagham ।
ataḥ śeṣaḥ śeṣītyayamubhaya-sādhāraṇatayā
sthitāḥ sambandho vāṁ samarasaparānandaparayoḥ ॥*

You are the body of Śambhu with the sun and moon
as your twin breasts; your self I take to be the flawless self
of *bhava*, O Blessed Lady; hence, as you reciprocally
realize each other as complements and essence,
this union exists of you two experiencing
supreme bliss with equal savor.



We are embodied persons. A person can open his eyes and see several objects. These objects are the seen and the person is the seer. The person can also look at his hands or legs and other visible parts of the body. Then they are also objects, the seen. Now here a question comes: "Who is the seer and what is the seen?" When a person is seeing his own body objectively, where is the subject? Is there some location in the body where a separate seer is sitting? If the eye is an organ of seeing, is the seer of the eye different from the eye? A philosopher can make abstractions and put a seer behind the eye, a listener behind the ear, but do we experience such a separate entity? We do not. We are not only observing and scanning the outer surface of our body, but we are thinking, reasoning, feeling good or bad. While knowing, thinking, and feeling, we also know that we know, think, reason, do, appreciate, and resent. Even subjective ideas are treated as objects of a more subjective core. If both subjective ideas and the witness of subjective ideas are of the nature of consciousness,

from where do we obtain distinguishing boundaries for each? We do not know. We only assume that all these are separate entities because we have labeled them meaningfully, circumlimiting logical units of consciousness, and because we think with words. Each word is used as a specifying instrument of a formulated concept within unspecified and unformulated consciousness. So the distinctions are nominal, pertaining to names.

From what is apparently the most external and independent body of matter "out there" to the innermost, self-luminous awareness of "I am", we have a complex situation to reckon with. We are at once a body and spirit, inseparable from each other. Not any bit of what may be called the spirit can stand on its own without a corresponding body aspect to sustain it. Every bodily aspect is to be reduced in terms of conceivable knowledge so that it can be known. Thus in one sense everything is spiritual. It is equally true to say that everything is physical. The *śarīra* (body) and *ātman* (spirit), when taken unitively, are not even interlaced as the warp and woof of a fabric. The division is arbitrary, and yet they are conceivably different.

This is the first idea one comes to when meditating on the complementarity of *Śiva* and *Śakti* as the two phases of his own person. This aspect is *jīva-vyūha*. *Vyūha* is an organized state, well ordered, and functionally arranged. When a squad of soldiers are arrayed in a certain manner that is called a *vyūha*. Similarly, the organized person is a *vyūha*. One can think of *Śiva* as the nucleic awareness of that person and *Śakti* as the body. With the same justification one can also think that *Śakti* is the central core and *Śiva* is the manifested person. This verse wants to treat both aspects as interchangeable.

From the day we are born we hear spoken language around us. Unconsciously we relate the sound tokens to many objects around us and also to ideas that are communicated to us through words. Even our pets like cats and dogs understand the language that is spoken to them. Words are structured with consonants and vowels. This is a person's first exercise and training to relate him or herself to everything outside. It is like a magical performance, reducing the entire world into an internally arranged lexicon of well-coordinated linguistic relationships. Then, in about four or five years, a person has all the essential words very well known so as to use them correctly. This is the first *vyūha* (organized state) built around

a person, to act as a member of the society to which he belongs. That is called the *kalāvṛyūha*.

Everything one hears, sees, and experiences is first to be reduced to the ciphers or codes of language, and then for orientation they all are to be referred to a central point where one experiences I-consciousness. The "I" is the reckoner of all the ciphers with which it is fed. That central witness should be able to decipher, then and there, every symbol flashed to it. This central location can be shifted from one center to another in the vertical parameter of the person's knowledge, ranging from the most unconscious to the most conscious, from the most irrational notion to the most rationalized mathematical certitude. That center point governs the *bindu vyūha*. The *bindu* can be located in the six synergic centers of the *mūlādhāra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *maṇipūra*, *anāhata*, *viśuddhi*, and *ājñā*.

An intimate experience of inexpressible ecstasy can be the dominant note of an imperiential impact, and yet the person has no way to extricate himself from the ongoing joyous state and see it objectively. It is real and yet is indescribable in words. When, at the central locus of a person, this most impersonal absorption comes and the boundaries of the person dissolve away, it is a stage of the *parā*. Between the unmodulated and the modulated an envisioning happens which is still of an unconscious state. This is something similar to what is spoken of as the preconscious waiting at the threshold of overt awareness and is called *paśyanti*. Then it finds a medium to burst into a consciously recognizable idea or feeling. It is the *madhyamā*. Then, finally, appropriate words are found. A person is speaking to himself from inside. The voice of his own soul, as it were, is heard, spoken by the tongue and listened to by the same person's ear. This is *vaikhari*. This inner manifestation is attributed to the *nāda vyūha*, language organization.

Language is necessary to express one's assent and dissent, pleasure and displeasure, and various kinds of affectation. There is no affectivity without an ego center. A pain-giving or pleasure-giving signal recalls all similar experiences of the past. That enables the individual to accept or reject, to fight or to flee. Thus *ahankāra*, the assertion of the ego, is tied up with its memories, *citta*. With the help of memories, the true nature of the situation with which one is presented is recognized and identified. This is *buddhi*, the role of the intellect. The judgment that is thus made is in



Śiva and Pārvatī on Mount Kailāsa. Carved stone, Banteay Srei, Cambodia, CE 967.

answer to several questions that arise from the mind (*manas*). However psychological or spiritual these experiences look, they cannot manifest without the physical or physio-chemical basis of a body. We may not know the true nature of it in the gross organism before us, but there is a "stuff" out of which everything has come to have a physical status. That is *mahat*. This group of psycho-physical manifestations comes with the *vyūha* called *citta*.

Here we have seen that we are deeply immersed in something unknown to us, and yet the unknown is becoming known through some unknown mechanism of the knowing body-self complex. To know means to assemble consciousness in a certain way and to formulate it in an intelligent manner. This is *savikalpa*. From that one can also go into a state and a person recognizes the incidence of that state only after his or her return to consciousness or *savikalpa*. This is *nirvikalpa*. Both *savikalpa* and *nirvikalpa* belong to *jñāna vyūha*.

The most mysterious phenomenon is how things are named. A proto-language and a meta-language are being woven into each other. The words of such a language can relate in such a manner that new meanings can be conceived and new names born. More and more experiences mean the generation of more and more names. That word-generating system which operates as the dynamic of erudition is *nāma vyūha*.

The fact that there are millions of names vouches for the existence of millions of forms. Forms are the most universal and the most unique aids to specification, and that specificity is enhanced with the endless mixing of colors. Thus, a person is placed in a colorful world which is laid out in the vastness of infinite space. This is the *kula vyūha*.

From the time taken for the wink of an eye, to the total dissolution of the entire world at the close of a cycle, all comes within a time span. The time-generating and time-dispensing principle is attributed to *kāla vyūha*.

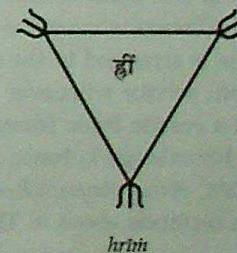
These are the nine *vyūhas* which are at once of *Śiva* and of *Śakti*. They are relevant both to the physical world and to the spiritual understanding of it. Thus when all the nine *vyūhas* are meditated upon, one does not turn away from the physical to become spiritual or from the spiritual to become more factual. All dualities cease. One finds his or her own place in the total scheme and resonates with this design as a co-creator and co-evolute.

Hrīm is placed within a triangle for meditation.



Interlaced Lovers. Carved stone ornamentation, temple of Khajuraho, India, thirteenth century.

As embodied lovers, Śiva and Śakti/Pārvati represent the polar forces of male and female that attract and complement one another. In their embrace, they define one another as "the other". At the same time their union represents the unified re-emergence of the individual into the transcendent ground of being.



Verse Thirty-five

मनस्त्वं व्योम त्वं मरुदसि मरुत्सारथिरसि
त्वमापस्त्वं भूमिस्त्वयि परिणतायां न हि परम्।
त्वमेव स्वात्मानं परिणमयितुं विश्ववपुषा
चिदानन्दाकारं शिवयुवति भावेन बिभृषे॥

*manastvaṁ vyoma tvaṁ marudasi marutsārathirasi
tvamāpastvaṁ bhūmistvayi pariṇatāyāṁ na hi param ।
tvameva svātmānaṁ pariṇamayitum viśvavapuṣā
cidānandākāraṁ śivayuvati bhāvena bibhṛṣe ॥*

You are the mind (in the *ājñā*), the sky (in the *viśuddhi*),
the wind also (in the *anāhata*), and the charioteer of the winds
(in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*). You are the water (in the *maṇipūra*).
Apart from your manifested form, there is nothing else.
In order to manifest by your own Self, you assume
this form of the universe, this form of blissful consciousness,
and triumphantly rule as the young bride of *Śiva*.



A healthy, creative mind is like a young bride. It is joyous, full of imagination, loving, and desiring to be loved. The bride is full of dreams of a world of her own. There are many things to achieve and many devices to create, and everything is to be organized. She is no longer a child in her parent's home. She has come into her own and is expected to be both the author and authority. With wide-open eyes she looks around and ascertains in her mind whatever is there. She assumes the role of the knower: she knows whatever is fully known and what is yet to be known. Knowledge is arranged in the mind as relevant information that can be pressed into service whenever there is a need. "She" is not an ordinary bride, but a cosmic bride (*śivayuvati*, the absolute, youthful female). Her world of knowledge is basic, that of the knower, knowledge and the known (*jñāti*, *jñāna*, *jñeya*). Whatever is known is either here or out there. There is a certitude about it. The bride confidently says, "This is." There

is a ring of truth in that statement. It is *satya* (existence). That confidence of pinpointing truth comes from self-founded awareness. It is the knowledge that discovers truth and sustains existence as a reliable factor. It is *cit*. It is no more a dream but an actual, adorable reality, *ānanda*. At her core, the young bride is that pulsating joy. The bliss that wells up in her mind is allowed to flow in all directions. She gives her touch of beauty to everything she handles. She brings order out of chaos and gives color and music to life because her very essence is *cidānanda* (blissful consciousness). Her knowledge is like an instrument, a vehicle, a weapon, and a device. That is her equipment to create. She creates by desiring. She is composed of triple dynamics: the dynamic of knowledge, the dynamic of desire or volition, and the dynamic of creation.

She sits with the wisdom of a third eye in the *ājñā* (the synergic center of command). It is from there she gives orders. She is wielding the past, the present, and the future of her own world. As sovereign she fashions the future to be a perfect continuation of the present which is the fulfillment of the past. She can easily move from a latent incipient memory to the imagination of a dream and from an imagination to its actualization. She is a consummate artist. The very beauty of her being flows out into colors, forms, and striking meaning: it is this vast universe, with its sky studded with stars, colorful horizons, hills and dales, and flowers and birds. Thus she goes on painting.

This young wife, who is the cosmic mind of creation, is neither dumb nor mute. She is the goddess of words: words of wisdom, purity, and inspiration, words that gladden her own mind and the minds of all. She enters the mansion of truth and plays on her lyre a melody of words. She is in the *viśuddhi*. From her the wind blows in all directions, overladen with the fragrance of her goodwill and her song of joy. It is her joy that generates the promise of tomorrow, the impulse to go on, a looking forward to tomorrow. She is the heart of the entire universe, a heart overwhelmed with love and compassion. Such is her unbroken love for the world she is creating around her that she is resolute and determined to save and care for all. She is the *anāhata*.

She likes transparency, whether it is the transparency of clear water, the water of life, or the nourishing sap of a tree. She is life and she is the bringer of life. She waters the seeds of dreams and the minds of creators.



Traditional Navaho wedding basket. Woven and dyed rush, America.

Life is essentially composed of changing moods. It is her joy to bring cheer and wash away all depressions. Her very nature is like the billowy waves of sweetest affection (*saundaryalaharī*). Sitting in the *maṇipūra* (the pearl of perfection), she acts as an alchemist, bringing perfection to everything. This is what the cosmic bride wants to achieve in her self-created home that is this world. In order to fashion, mold, purify, and test, she ignites the fire of the *svādhiṣṭhāna*.

Ultimately the stamp of actuality should be laid on everything created. It should be as firm as *terra firma*. Nothing is more actual than the firm ground on which this bride, this cosmic mind of creation, stands. She comes to the very foundation of factual truth, *mūlādhāra*. This is the world of *śivadūtī* which is at once gross, subtle, causal, and transcendental. It is in that world that she rules as both a joyous wife and mother. She plays in the precincts of that home as her own sweet, innocent daughter because she is Bālā, Lalitā, and Rājarājeśvarī or the child, the youthful maiden, and the Supreme Sovereign Creatrice. *Aum*.

Verse Thirty-six

तवाज्ञाचक्रस्थं तपनशशिकोटिद्युतिधरं
परं शंभुं वन्दे परिमिलितपार्श्वं परचिता।
यमाराध्यन् भक्त्या रविशशिशुचीनामविषये
निरातङ्गे लोके निवसति हि भालोकभुवने॥

*tavājñā cakrasthaṁ tapanaśaśikoṭidyutidharaṁ
paraṁ śambhuṁ vande parimilitapārśvaṁ paracitā ।
yamārādhyān bhaktyā raviśaśiśucīnāmaviṣaye
nirātaṅge loke nivasati hi bhālokaḥbhuvane ॥*

O Mother, I worship Śambhu (Śiva),
the Absolute inset in your *ājñā cakra*,
which has the radiance of a million suns and moons.
His two sides are illumined by the light of supreme
consciousness. He who worships with devotion
that which is beyond the reach of the lights of sun, moon
and fire, and beyond comprehension, and alone,
lives indeed in the world of the noumenon.



There is a fire in the pit of man's stomach which needs fuel. When that fire of hunger is left unquenched, man becomes agitated in his body and mind. Hunger continues to be the most crucial problem of the world's people; it has an eternal status. However much it is appeased, it reappears in a few hours. To win his bread man barter his freedom. In this matter, man is no different from other creatures. There is another fire which makes man even more restless, and its flames are more subtle than those of hunger. This is sex. The fire of hunger can be appeased with food, but sex is more complex. Its tongues are uncouth and irrational in their discrimination. Man, thus, is caught between these two hell fires of hunger and sex.

Corresponding to the fires of hunger and sex, there is the actual fire which man keeps in his hearth. The kitchen where the mother cooks her broth continues to be the point of return to which every person comes

after a day's hard labor. The fire outside and the fire inside obligate man to make a family. Cooking and sharing physical food and love are the common theme of the family. Thus people sit around fire and make the family unit. This was particularly true when our forefathers were hunters and nomads but continues today even if in a more sophisticated way.

The human body is a crucible where chemical interactions are occurring all the time and where different fires are continually ignited and quenched. A word of love, or even the ghost of a gesture, is enough to evoke an emotional upsurge. The body becomes overheated, the skin burns, and the mouth parches when the agitation of anger or erotics becomes inflamed. Jealousy, bickering, and all such pinpricks also enter into the domain of the irrational fires that dwell in our systems. When these instinctive biological, psychological, or even sociological demands produce cross fires or short circuits, it becomes a problem to the mind and immediate solutions are to be found. The *ājñā* is the synergic center which presides over life at the conscious level. When that center is not disciplined, an automatic reaction comes as a response to a problem rather than a proper solution being constructed. Thus in our daily lives, most people live at an action-reaction level. Even in the case of disciplined people, there are many conditioned reflexes. Only after their initial reaction of fear or anger do they realize the ugliness of such behavior. The domain of fire is like a family affair. It is mostly lived behind the screen of privacy. The inner smoulderings of people make them alone, desperate, and unable to share their private agonies with even their best friends. Emotional conflagrations come like a brush fire and intelligence is at a loss to quench them.

In the course of social evolution humans have learned to appreciate truth revealed by the light of the sun. At night the stump of a tree may look like a ghost though in broad daylight it reveals itself to be only a stump. Through the clarity of light man freed himself of many of the superstitions which kept him in a barbaric state. Public education is like bringing a little of the sun into each life. When knowledge is standardized as common and scientifically verifiable, many answers to the problems that are created by the fires of hunger, sex, and other instinctive urges are resolved. But everything in man cannot be laid on the table to be scrutinized in the light of scientific inquiry. Even the best scientist has his

own personal problems of a very subtle nature that cannot be shared. In the domains of fire and sun, people share many things with each other, and yet, in a serious way, they are alone. They cannot put their total trust in another because our instincts are not the same and are not of the same intensity or quality. The conditionings of our intelligences are different, as are the varieties of information we receive.

There is another light available to people which is not as hot as fire nor as intense as sunlight, the gentle light of the moon. Even when the sun illuminates the external world, men and women bask in the sheen of the moonlight of their minds. God may be creating the world outside, but man as an individual, has to forge all the necessary concepts to identify every percept presented to him. Conceptualization and ideation are always going on in the lunar sphere of his mind. This area is also fraught with tragic elements. The effects of sun and fire are more tangible than those of the moon. Thoughts can drug the persona. Imaginations can go wild and the whirlpool of imagination catches the individual in the snare of another kind of loneliness. Persons, events, and places are all generated within oneself. Even the need to relate with other people is negated, and man snares himself in the worst kind of narcissistic withdrawal. The havoc is recognized only when it becomes obviously pathological.

In all these matters, the individual consciousness placed in the *ājñā* is governing our life. The execution of this charge cannot be given to a proxy. Unfortunately, most people are inefficient in carrying out their own self-government. They live in despair, in constant agitation, and with a sense of helplessness. Either they sit and cry or they shriek and shout in desperation. This is the tragic drama of life which we live in our arena illuminated by the sun and moon and fire. The face of truth is hidden by a golden disk and a hallucinatory trickster is interfering at every step. Hence, the prayer in the *Īśāvāsya Upaniṣad* to remove the golden disk that veils the face of truth.

When there is a silver lining on the edge of a cloud, it indicates that the sun is behind it. Similarly, behind this phenomenal show of fantasy, there shines Śambhu, the bringer of peace, joy and harmony. As we tire ourselves with the countless problems of everyday life, we do not even suspect that there is a way out. It is actually not a way out but a way in. It is cutting through both spiritualism and materialism. Śambhu is to be



Cosmic Man. From a *Samgrahanisūtra* (Jaina cosmological text), India, 1604.

In many Indian philosophical and artistic traditions the physical body is seen as an archetypal ground of connection between the inner psychic world and the outer macrocosm, and it is used as a broad canvas on which to paint various cosmological manifestations.

meditated upon: the noumenon that surpasses the brilliance of millions of suns and moons cannot be comprehended with the mind conditioned by instincts, rational reasoning, or imagination. With mystic zeal one has to make a breakthrough. It is like entering into a pilgrimage of the alone to the Alone. It is said to be a world which fire and moon and sun cannot reach.

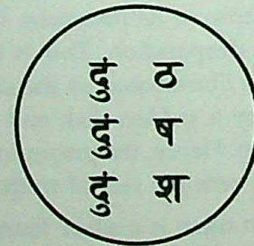
It may sound like the world of truth is very far. In fact, it is nearer than the throb of one's own heart. In this verse it is said that Śambhu is right where our consciousness is felt in the *ājñā*. We are familiar with the wakeful, the dream and deep sleep states of consciousness, and yet there is also a fourth state, the transcendental. You cannot break open the portals of the transcendental just as you cannot unfurl the petals of a bud with force. One has to be patient. The highest truth dawns from within, but not to the lazy one who pins his faith to fate but to him or her who is vigilant. Jesus Christ describes this as brides sitting in the bridal chamber in a sleepless watch with their midnight lamps burning. This is an endeavor and an effort which are different from striving for success in the world of transactions. There is an earnestness to seek and find. It is not the restless agitation of an undisciplined mind. It is a very, very gentle inward pacing without expectations.

When the mind is cluttered with prefabricated ideas of truth, we stumble on the idiotic creations of our own imaginations. The only advice that can be given is:

Have faith in the benevolence of your creator. Have patience. Make your search genuinely loveful. Show the same patience to what is revealed by the light of fire, the light of the sun, and the light of the moon. Prepare yourself to be a worthy receptacle to hold the most precious gift of the Divine.

Then peace comes. *Śam* is peace and *Śambhu* is the generating of peace. Let peace prevail. *Aum śānti*.

Four mantras, *duṁ*, *ṭha*, *ṣa*, *śa* are arranged within a circle for this verse.



duṁ, ṭha, ṣa, śa

Verse Thirty-seven

विशुद्धौ ते शुद्धस्फटिकविशदं व्योमजनकं
शिवं सेवे देवीमपि शिवसमानव्यवसिताम्।
ययोः कान्त्या यान्त्या शशिकिरणसारूप्यसरणे
विधूतान्तर्ध्वान्ता विलसति चकोरीव जगती॥

*viśuddhau te śuddha sphaṭika viśadam vyomajanakam
śivam seve devīmapi śivasamānavyavasitām ।
yayoh kāntyā yāntyā śaśikiraṇasārūpya saraṇera
vidhūtāntardhvāntā vilasati cakorīva jagatī ॥*

In your *viśuddhi cakra*, crystal clear and sky-generating,
I adore *Śiva*, and *Śakti* who has equality with *Śiva*.
There is a combined streaming of the lovely splendor
of this couple which travels like a course of moon-beams.
The world, basking in that light, seems like a *cakora* bird
with her inner darkness dispelled.

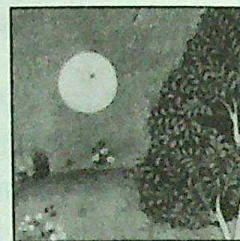


To the earth the sun is a harsh task master. All day her children are put to strenuous work. In the night, the moon comes as a dear lover, fondles all, and puts them to a restful sleep filled with dreams. These alternating aspects of the outgoing working mind and inward flowing contemplation are shared by all. In Christian religious life, piety is alternated with works. In Hinduism the same pairing is called *jñāna* and *karma*. In each instance both aspects are governed by the same godhood. The main theme is the coming together of a lover and a beloved, like *Śiva* and *Śakti*. Between two people there can exist distance, strangeness, even hatred. There is also the possibility of closeness, intimacy, and union in love. Thus there is a wide area to cover with transactions. Most transactions happen through the exchange of words. Words come from the *viśuddhi* (throat center). In word and voice culturing, education and socialization play a great part. Words can be used to express truth in clear terms. They can also be used as masks and for the purposes of deceit and betrayal. Thus truth and untruth have their currency of real and counterfeit in word circulation.

For this reason a spiritual person is expected to bring purity to the word-generating *ākāśa* of his vocal system. *Nāda* (sound) is said to be the quality of *ākāśa* (ether). *Ākāśa* also is the first of the five elements and donates space for each separate body to exist. Interaction is going on on all sides. Transaction is called *vyavasāya*. In interpersonal and transpersonal transactions the *vyavasāya* (the act of transacting) is aided by both *Śiva* and *Śakti*. The light of the spirit pairs with the physical body-mind complex, and so *Śiva* and *Śakti* are both to be seen in the *viśuddhi* (throat plex), the source of words.

When two people are enticed by mutual attraction and they come together, they begin their transaction in silence. They are unable to find appropriate words. When they slowly enter into conversation, a number of instincts are evoked. Is the other a friend or an enemy? Both suspect. Walls and trenches are to be created between them in case the other turns malevolent. Words are fired with the intention of winning the other from a safe angle. Motives can be suspected. Every word can arouse suspicion. A word said inadvertently can bring fear and frustration. Thus there is much darkness generated in the sky of friendship. A dialogue begun in good spirit soon ends in a fight. Words can be man's best friends and his worst enemies. But when love distills through all these obstacles and finally reaches the other's soul, words are no longer of any use. One look in the eye is enough. Love can speak without any word and can open up one's entire soul to the other. That is presented here as *śuddha sphaṭika viśadam* (a crystal clear expanse). Where there is crystal clear clarity in the word context, that alone is *viśuddhi*.

In spiritual *sādhana* (striving), it is very important to be absolutely truthful both in word and intent. In the *viśuddhi* dwell *Śiva* and *Śakti*. Propitiation given to them is given to the adorable truth. Indian poets thought that the classical approach in love should be that of a female partridge (*cakora*), enjoying the moonlight. There is no hard labor here. To move out of the dark shadow of the jungle into the moonlight is all that is expected of a *cakora*. Similarly, the lover allows himself or herself to be carried away by the attraction of love. Under the moon, everything looks as if it is dissolving in the light, and the *cakora* bird itself dissolves in moonlight. There is no ego. There is no holding out. There is nothing to establish. There is simply being and remaining in the gentlest of embraces.



Moons and suns from Indian paintings.

Top: Cowgirls searching for Kṛṣṇa, *Mewar*, c. 1730.

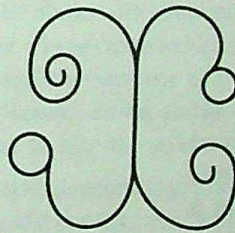
Center: Sohini swimming to meet Mahiwāl, *Bāndī*, c. 1790.

Bottom: At a shrine to Śiva, by Fateh Chand, *Mughal*, c. 1735.

Nothing is more dear to a person than the Self and the greatest of all beloveds is the Supreme Self. In the present case the Supreme Self is located in the *visuddhi* as *Śiva* and *Śakti*, the archetypal lover and beloved. We return to our source and merge with them in the mutual embrace in their union.

Sri Ramakrishna describes this union in many ways. He says it is like hungry people going for a country feast. Until the delicious meal is served to them they make a lot of noise, but once they settle down to eat they go into silence. Occasionally one may hear a sound of exclamation as they enjoy their meal. Similarly, when drawn to the beloved, one begins with words of praise, singing hymns, and making supplications. That is the *vaikhari*. Then one gets into the ecstatic states of *madhyamā* which promote spiritual envisioning, *paśyanti*. Ultimately, everything is forgotten in the beatitude of love, reaching *parā*. This is the wonder of going from words to silence and from anguish to ecstasy in the experiencing of love. Devotion to God is the ultimate love.

Ra is meditated upon within the following *yantra*.



ॠ

ra



Verse Thirty-eight

समुन्मीलत्सवित्कमलमकरन्दैकरसिकं
भजे हंसद्वन्द्वं किमपि महतां मानसचरम्।
यदालापादष्टदशगुणितविद्यापरिणति-
र्यदादत्ते दोषाद् गुणमखिलमद्भ्यः पय इव॥

*samunmīlat samvit kamala makarandaika rasikam
bhaje haṁsadvandvaṁ kim api mahatāṁ mānasacaram ।
yadālāpādaṣṭādaśaguṇita vidyā pariṇatir-
yadādatte doṣād guṇamakhilam adbhyaḥ paya iva ॥*

I meditate on those two swans (*haṁsas*), who delight
in partaking of the nectar of the lotuses of knowledge,
blossoming within the consciousness of certain great souls
who are used to dwelling in the lake of *mānasa*.
It is as a result of their elaboration that the maturation
of the eighteen arts takes place, freed from dross,
their goodness extracted like milk from water.



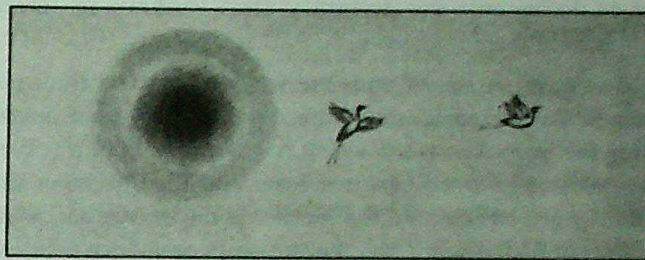
The here and now is inset in the eternal that is lived everywhere. Our eyes are small, and the organ of sight is tucked into the brain in the mystery of its grey matter. In it is mirrored the vast universe, like a world in its entirety reflected in a dewdrop. The outgoing senses are in intimate relationship with an all-deciphering mind. The worlds of perception and of reflection are like two comrades, like two swans living in the same lake, feeding on the honey of the same lotus. Or they are like two birds sitting on the same tree eating sweet and nourishing fruits. Whatever the senses perceive, our mind interprets. Whatever the mind conceives, the senses identify. Thus we are the two swans swimming in the lake of consciousness, two birds living on the tree of life.

Every science has its complementary technology. Knowledge and action go hand-in-hand. We are brought to the school of life to derive from it both the lessons of the tangible and the wisdom that transcends

the subject and its objectives. This hour can be an hour of peace and joy. It can also be an hour of horror and disgust. We can see in our neighborhood examples of both the tragedy and comedy of life enacted side by side. Nobody likes to live in anger and shame, pain and misery. Everyone at heart seeks quiet and peace and the joy that surpasses comprehension.

Those who are committed to this life have a duty to bring to every yearning heart the gospel of peace and joy. Long ago, seeing the misery of this world, its famine and poverty, disease and pestilence, old age and death, and plaguing injustice in society, a young prince renounced his scepter and became a wayfarer in order to seek redemption for the world. He sifted truth from untruth, the perennial from the transient, and preached to the world the *dharma* of blessedness. Prince Siddārtha became the Blessed Buddha, the Fully Awakened One. Similarly, a prophet of the wilderness appeared on the banks of the Jordan River. He called people to walk from darkness to light, to shake off their evils and live in piety. He baptized people in the river. There came to him Jesus of Nazareth, innocent and guileless, who received his baptism in the river from this prophet John. In Jesus, God was pleased. From above God descended upon him as pure spirit and assigned to him the role of the Savior.

Seeking, aspiration, and descending grace have not ceased. They continue even today. You are another one who is seeking. And you will also be a recipient of the same grace. The two swans of the lake, the two birds of the tree of life, are the man and God in us who are an inseparable pair. From one comes free will and from the other its execution. The kingdom of God is compared to the wisdom of a farmer who gathers both chaff and grain and then sifts them meticulously in the wind. He burns the chaff and keeps the grain in his barn. This is to be our daily routine. Through the doors of perception we receive a million images. Some are real and some are unreal. Swans are reputed to separate milk from water. Even so, in our daily life, we have to separate truth from untruth, the eternal from the fleeting, virtues from evils and light from darkness. The heart and the head are like two eyes, one to see truth and the other to see goodness. One has to learn how to be pleased with truth

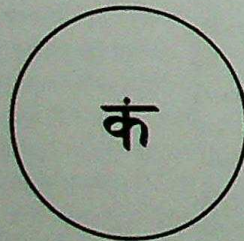


Hamsa from the Indian painting. Lady yearning for her lover, Būndī, about 1780.

and to desire only the desirable. Thus we have an emotional life to complement our intelligence.

To equip ourselves with the wisdom to live beautifully, we have evolved the eighteen arts of life. From the depth of our silence there arises the unspoken word which has within it both a will and a vision. The envisioned word assumes form and then becomes utterable. The spoken word passes from the speaker to the listener and from the teacher to the pupil. The word has the power to announce the path. It has the dynamics to persuade all to go from where they are to the chosen goal. It is from the word that both light and life come. Life has needs to be fulfilled and freedom to enjoy. Therefore nine sets of arts are conceived for the fulfillment of needs and nine to transport man from the rigid world of needs to the heaven of freedom. For example, man needs a shelter over his head. Even the simplest hut which man makes implies in it the art of architecture. It is developed into the highest expression of beauty when people construct a temple to God, such as the Cathedral of Chartres. The cathedral is not a place to cook food, beget children or groom the family. It is there only for people to gather in friendship and worship the Unknown. Thus from need to freedom man develops the art of architecture. Utility blends with beauty. In and around us we can see the entire culture of the world as a composition of the physical and the spiritual, the real and the factual, coming together like the two hands of God creating the beautiful to glorify the supreme intelligence which is at once the Word and God. *Aum*.

Placed within a circle is the single *mantra karī* for meditation.



karī

Verse Thirty-nine

तव स्वाधिष्ठाने हुतवहमधिष्ठाय निरतं
तमीडे संवर्तं जननि महतीं तां च समयाम्।
यदालोके लोकान् दहति महति क्रोधकलिते
दयाद्रा यादृष्टिः शिशिरमुपचारं रचयति॥

*tava svādhiṣṭhāne hutavahamadhiṣṭhāya nirataṁ
tamīḍe saṁvartaṁ janani mahatīm tāṁ ca samayām ।
yadāloke lokān dahati mahati krodha kalite
dayādrā yā dṛṣṭiḥ śīśiramupacāraṁ racayati ॥*

O Mother, I praise you, placing in your *svādhiṣṭhāna*
the fire of sacrifice, ever looking upon it as the great fire
of doom and also placing *samaya* there, so that
when the worlds are burning in his mighty stir of anger,
your glance permeated with pity renders the world
the cooling touch of early spring.



We live and die in the mystery of an unresolvable paradox.
We wake up in the morning only to go to sleep in the evening.
We breathe in to breathe out. We tastefully cook our food
and eat it with relish, and then we excrete it as dirt. Strangers
meet in fear and suspicion. These attitudes change into
friendship and comradeship. Friendship goes sour, and people who have
been living in intimate relation for several years get on each other's nerves
and find it so difficult to tolerate the other's presence. This riddle is to be
faced in one's own personal foundation of life. In Sanskrit such a
foundation is called *svādhiṣṭhāna*. The truth of a fabric comes from the
threads that go into it as the warp and woof. The truth of the thread is in
the fibers with which the yarn is made. The truth of the fiber is in the
molecular arrangement of the material of the fiber. Thus it goes, *ad
infinitum*. There is always a foundation and an apparent superimposition.

The two edges of the problem are life and death. We are said to be
living when we breathe. Breath has energy in it. The *yogīs* speak of fivefold
energies (*prāṇas*). The intaking breath is called *prāṇa*, and the outgoing

breath is *apāna*. Respiration is happening between the two extreme points of intake and output. Thus, in everything connected with life, there are opposites. Love generates hatred; hatred generates love. The transformation of one into the other is hard to discern. Like right and left, diastole and systole, and positive and negative, the creative principle and the annihilative principle are paired. In the *svādhiṣṭhāna* (the genital region) the meditator is worshipping the creative Mother and the destroying Father.

Fire is the best symbol to represent life and death, and like entropy and negentropy there has to be the balancing of fire in the *prāṇa*. Life begins with the commencement of respiration and ends with its cessation. The start of respiration or inhalation is *prāṇa*. Before its complete extension comes, a flushing out of *prāṇa* rhythmically comes in the form of *apāna*. The last and final expulsion is *udāna*. Thus *apāna* is actually playing only a minor and representative role for *udāna*. The real polarization is between *prāṇa* and *udāna*. For the cancellation of opposite tendencies which occur in the breathing organism of the body, two other varieties of *prāṇas* are postulated, *vyāna* and *samāna*. Every cell in the body, filled with *prāṇa*, should be sucked away through the exhaust of *apāna*. The points of conjunction of *prāṇa* and *apāna* are where the *vyānas* are located throughout the entire body. In fact, they are the body. Energy is to be equally distributed and that role is given to *samāna*. The *svādhiṣṭhāna* can be looked upon as a major control area for incoming and outgoing energy.

Two processes of burning are to be conceived. One is from moment to moment, and the other is a burning that leads to a final cessation. This can be understood by taking the example of a burning candle. At every given moment the candle has a flame. The flame of the previous moment is not the flame of the present moment. It is as if the flames of all the passing moments of a candle come under one series. That series closes with the burning out of the entire candle. Even larger "candles" like the stars burn out into extinction. In this verse there is the sacrificial fire in which a person is offering his energy day after day to accomplish his daily goals; ultimately then he has no more fuel to burn and comes to cessation. That fire which burns him out is also the same fire that burns stars into total dissipation. *Rudra Śiva* is postulated as this fire of doom.

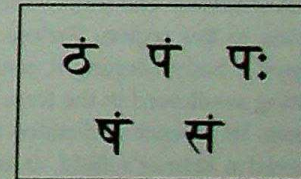
Every person born as male or female knows the fire of the genitals. A casual look, or a momentary touch, or a single word is enough to trigger the fire of passion. The creative mother is like an explosive in the genital

area. A sacrificer, a sacrifice, and the receiver of sacrifice are introduced through that vulnerable look or touch. The sperm-bearing male is agitated. He becomes a priest to enter into a ritualistic worship of the female genital. She in turn becomes a sacrificial pit of glowing embers, ready to accept the oblation of the male semen. At the commencement of coitus, a man clings to his woman as though he cannot part from her for all eternity. He is infused with her *prāṇa* and she is infused with his. Then *apāna* finally flushes him out. His intertwining arms go loose. He no longer wants to hold her and may even get up and walk away in disgust. The Mother creates in love and the Father destroys in remorse.

The seed cast into the sacrificial pit of the mother's genital is sucked into the womb and carefully sealed in her own egg. There is an immortal element in the life-bearing spirit, but the hand of destruction is there also. That uni-cell is cut into two. The divided cells assume autonomy. The mother goes on organizing the proliferated cells into the organism of a fully functional person. When the womb which gave protection to the fetus cannot hold the child inside any longer, *apāna* gives the last push and the child is out of the mother. A child coming into the world comes with an open mouth of hunger, ready to devour everything. All vegetation and all animal species are mercilessly chopped, cooked, and swallowed. A number of years go that way, in which the main business of the living person is to devour life. And then one day he or she is also finished with and changed into compost, food for others. Thus life goes into death and death resurrects back into life.

What is happening in a small way to the living beings on earth can and will happen to the starry heavens. Our planets are mud pieces. They will break and dissipate. The Supreme Lord, father of destruction, is victorious in pulverizing the entire cosmos. This annihilation is done with the full consent and aid of the Supreme Mother of compassion. She allows her lord to clear the board but she never forgets her motherhood. Joyously, sportively, all the worlds dispersed into indiscernible energy will spiral back into galaxies and stars, planets, and life forms. Such is the grand drama that is meditated upon in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. Father is Mother and Mother is Father. Sons and daughters are born only to be fathers and mothers. This is the ongoing game that spells a wonder that never ceases.

For meditation the following *mantras* of *ṭharī*, *parī*, *paḥ*, *ṣarī*, and *sarī* are located within this rectangular *yantra*.



ṭharī, parī, paḥ, ṣarī, sarī

Verse Forty

तटित्वन्तं शक्त्या तिमिरपरिपन्थिस्फुरणया
स्फुरन्नानारत्नाभरणपरिणद्धेन्द्रधनुषम्।
तव श्यामं मेघं कमपि मणिपूरैकशरणं
निषेवे वर्षन्तं हरमिहिरतप्तं त्रिभुवनम्॥

*taṭitvantaṁ śaktyā timiraparipanthisphuraṇayā
sphuran nānā ratnābharāṇa pariṇaddhendradhanuṣam ।
tava śyāmaṁ meghaṁ kamapi maṇipūraika śaraṇaṁ
niṣeve varṣantaṁ haramihirataptaṁ tribhuvanam ॥*

I worship that Paśupati coupled with you, Śakti,
residing in the *maṇipūra* as a dark cloud traversed by
forceful lightning which banishes all darkness
and armed with Indra's bow decorated with jewels
and studded with resplendent precious stones.
The three worlds burnt to ashes by the scorching sun of Hara
are cooled with your rain.



When the fetus is in the uterus, the growing child does not see anything and does not hear anything. It does not breathe nor does it eat. It has no separate consciousness. However, it is provided with vital energies from the mother's breath and with the nourishment which the mother takes. It receives everything to sustain life through its umbilical cord. Until it is detached, the child is part of the mother. The *maṇipūra* is located where the umbilical cord once was. It is the region set between the genitals (*svādhiṣṭhāna*) and the heart (*anāhata*). The most secretive functions of body metabolism are happening in this region. Various fires and waters mix as if in alchemy and shape a body keeping it continuously nourished and replenished. Everything swallowed in the form of food is burned and split into minute fragments. Its essence is distilled to feed every cell. If the entire body is considered a farmer's field, it is as if irrigated with life-giving rain.

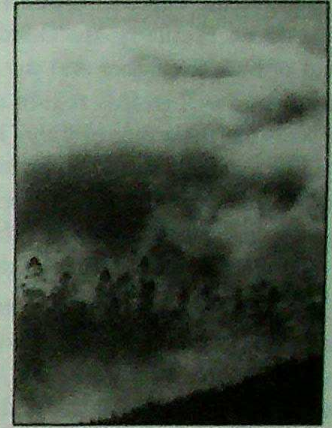
Therefore, the father and mother of life are conceived of as a rain-bearing cloud residing in the *maṇipūra*.

Varied functions are allotted to this region. The hunger of need and the satisfaction of appeasement are both experienced here. All parts of the body are activated to obtain food, clothing, shelter, and the security of the family. The fire in the *maṇipūra* is like a sacrificial fire. It can never be quenched. Everyday it is to be fueled. Whatever is given is consumed and again more is requested. The ongoing interest in life is kept alive by the all-consuming *maṇipūra*. Two different kinds of needs are prompting to find fulfillment. One from below the *maṇipūra* comes in the form of irrational erotics located in the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. The other is coming from the *anāhata*, the smouldering heart.

A situation can be taken to understand this phenomenon. A young woman's erotic passion is aroused when she is close to her spouse. She feels like she is burning in the fire of her sexual desire. It is as if she is cast into the flames of the *svādhiṣṭhāna*. Soon she becomes pregnant. Now the fire in the genital area becomes subdued. But another fire is lit in the heart. With all her expectations she cannot take her mind off the child growing within her. She is puzzled about how the child will look, what gender it will be, how it should be named, how it will be educated, to what goal it should be set, will the father be faithful, how to keep him amused. A kind of rivalry between the father and the child is felt. These are the pangs of the heart. The *svādhiṣṭhāna*, *maṇipūra*, and *anāhata* are all in a vertical line. Here the mind goes up and down. Only part of it is in the conscious sphere. Most of these things are happening in the dark.

From where do erotics come? Why are they so compulsive? Why does it change its face into attraction and repulsion? What causes the ambivalence of love and hate? Only the tip of the iceberg is seen. The rest is steeped in mystery. What is happening to the food that is taken? How is it split into salts and acids, proteins and vitamins? Who is carrying the essences to replenish the bone cells, the brain cells, the nerve cells? In spite of a person's total ignorance about all these things, there is some benevolent agency sitting in the *maṇipūra* which has perfect knowledge of all the bodily needs, and everything is taken care of as though life has a secret manager.

When a farmer sows his seeds and waits for rain, how does a cloud come and rain on his farm? Not a single farmer is brought to

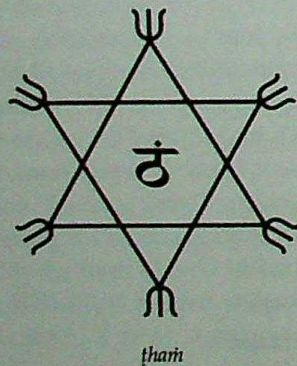


Rain clouds. Ootacamunda, Nilgiri Hills, India.

disappointment. The distribution of clouds is so perfect that everyone gets his quota. Similarly, the cloud of *maṇipūra* is a great friend. It is the domain of both the father and the mother of life. So the meditator brings his mind to dwell in this region of light. It is called *andhatāmiśram* (all dark) with the flickering of lights here and there. The benevolence of life comes like a grace. The more one knows the grace he receives, the brighter one's understanding becomes. The lightning that comes in pitch darkness is short lived, but that enables the tired traveler to see his immediate next step. The lightning comes again and again and again.

Our daily sustenance is like that. In this otherwise dark world, hope comes, good comes, and help comes, all like flickering lights. We do not know the source but we know it is there. Through experience, faith increases. When a day is hot and humid, we know rain will come and cool everything. And it does come. This is so symbolic of the two fires of the libido and our higher aspirations. The heart is again and again gladdened with the rainbows of aesthetic nourishment. Subliminal needs are also met with a rhythmic regularity. Thus the *maṇipūra*, placed between the *svādhiṣṭhāna* and the *anāhata*, is the great fulfiller of life. Faith and grace are its two wings. In the present verse we are not on the ascendancy. Balancing on these wings we are slowly descending to touch the *terra firma*. The final secrets are to be unraveled in the *mūlādhāra* (the base foundation). It is a marvel that within us we can discover the most secret generation of beauty and goodness.

Ṭharī is placed within two interlocking triangles.



Verse Forty-one

तवाधारे मूले सह समयया लास्यपरया
नवात्मानं मन्ये नवरसमहाताण्डवनटम्।
उभाभ्यामेताभ्यामुदयविधिमुद्दिश्य दयया
सनाथाभ्यां जज्ञे जनकजननीमज्जगदिदम्॥

*tavādhāre mūle saha samayayā lāsya parayā
navātmānaṁ manye navarasamahātāṇḍavanaṭam ।
ubhābhyām etābhyām udaya vidhimuddiśya dayayā
sanāthābhyām jajñe janaka jananīmajjagadidam ॥*

I meditate on your new Self, placed in your *mūlādhāra*
together with Samaya, given to her *lāsya* dance
and also that great *tāṇḍava* dancer.
Giving expression thereby to all nine aesthetic interests,
thus by their joint lordship, by mercy intending
the rebirth of the world, they confer on it
the renewed status of having both father and mother.



A virgin becomes a bride. With the blessings and prayers of all loving persons around, she enters into wedlock. She enters the nuptial chamber and cannot any longer think of herself as what she was until that day. It is as if one more soul has entered her heart. She cannot decide which of the two selves is dearer to her. She loves herself with the same intimacy as she loves her beloved. This is true for the bridegroom also. Thereafter, what she chooses is that which will bring delight to both. From then on she has to remember for herself and for her spouse as well. She should both give and take decisions and all her decisions are to be endorsed. Her spouse should agree only if she agrees. This is the magic circle of wedlock. She may go through so many chores of the day and her husband will run around on 100 errands. But she never leaves him, and he cannot put her out of his mind, even for a moment. The world around them is a stage set for them to dance. The music of her jingling bangles can be as much of an inspiration

for her lover to take her hand and pace steps with her as the music of the spheres which makes the entire world dance. Their dance is not an exposition. It is a tremor in the heart. Sometimes they leap into the air. She loves continuity. He loves serialized items of performance. Her dance is *lāsya* and his *tāṇḍava*. *Lāsya* means to be half merged with the background and half held out in expression. It is like the gentle dance of a candle flame in a windless room. Or it can be compared to a half-bloomed lotus flower enraptured by the rays of the morning sun, gently swayed by the ripples of the lake where she stands. Or it can be likened to the waxing of a moon from a crescent shape to that of the full moon. Such is the beauty of the *lāsya* dance.

His dance is different. If she is like a melody, he is like percussion and rhythm. The *tāṇḍava* suggests quick steps, violent motions, and leaps across the stage. It can be likened to a conflagration of fire, swept in all directions by a whirlwind. Or it can be likened to the mad onrush of a frenzied bumblebee that is struggling to reach the honey from a lotus flower. She is patient. He is hasty. Thus with full complementarity their courtship progresses.

She becomes pregnant. Now her beloved is doubly within her. She fathers the essences of the look, the moods, the tastes, the voice, the talents, and all the virtues of her husband and feeds them into the child that is growing in her. Now her husband is outside as a physical companion and inside as the source of her immaculate joy and wonder. From the time of conception she begins her vigilance. A third dimension is added on to her. The first dimension was that of the virgin, the second that of the wife, and the third is that of the mother. She sits introverted as if in continuous meditation. On seeing the withdrawn eyes and passive mood of the young wife, her husband knows that she is drawn to his essence and that he is growing within her.

The newborn has both parents looking on with awe and expectation. Two people who were all by themselves, looking at each other in wonder and amazement at how they became united, afterwards find it incredible to see a third person lying with them on the same bed, who is like both of them and yet different. The child has a separate identity, a personality of his or her own. Out of nothing, a third person has come. What difference is there between God, the creator of the universe, and these gods who



The goddess as a nursing mother. Stone sculpture, Orissa, India, eleventh century.

The full breasts of a mother represent the abundant beneficence of the world, personified as the maternal goddess.

have brought a fully fashioned human being out of their loins? The cow and the bull do it. The rooster and the hen also do it. Every species of beings is always engaged in the eternal dance of creation.

There is always a numerator "he" and a denominator "she". There is action which can be pacific or violent, or thoughts which can be gentle in meditation or violent in willful determination. When we look into the *mūlādhāra*, the source from where the fountain of life erupts, it is like the dance of one pair, *Śiva* and *Śakti*, mirrored in a million life forms. The spirit of dance is *ānanda* (joy). A loving couple looking into each other's eyes are enthralled with inexpressible happiness. To enhance the thrill of their joyous spirit they reach out to each other, holding together in an embrace called *ānanda bhairava* (the rejoicer in bliss) and *ānanda bhairavi* (the rejoicereess in bliss). They have several forms. They sit as birds on the branch of a tree and rub their beaks and chirp in joy. They may appear as slugs, as bugs, or as any animal of the air, earth or water.

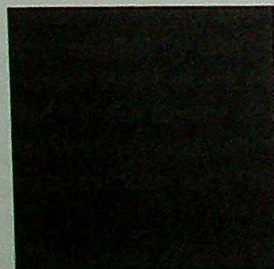
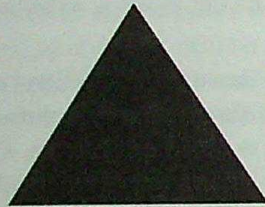
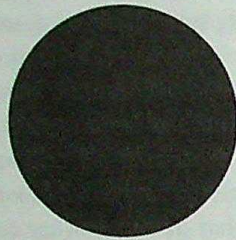
When did this sport begin? From the very dawn of life. Billions and billions of years ago, the same father and mother multiplied through their progeny and are still sitting with them with the same care. Our physical fathers and mothers will die, but the divine father and mother are always watching over us, caring for us every moment of our life. It is no wonder that they are, since God is love.

Aum śāntiḥ śāntiḥ śāntiḥ.



Natarāja, the King of Dance. Traditional Indian bronze sculpture.

Śiva as the god of destruction and creation dances the world into being and nothingness, again and again, as he forcefully stamps out the rhythm of the tāṇḍava dance. His earth-bound foot holds down the dwarf of the selfish ego while one of his hands is held in the mudrā of benediction, the second in the gesture of wisdom. His other hands hold a bowl of fire, which represents the blaze of wisdom, and a tiny drum which symbolizes the voice that speaks forth from that fire.

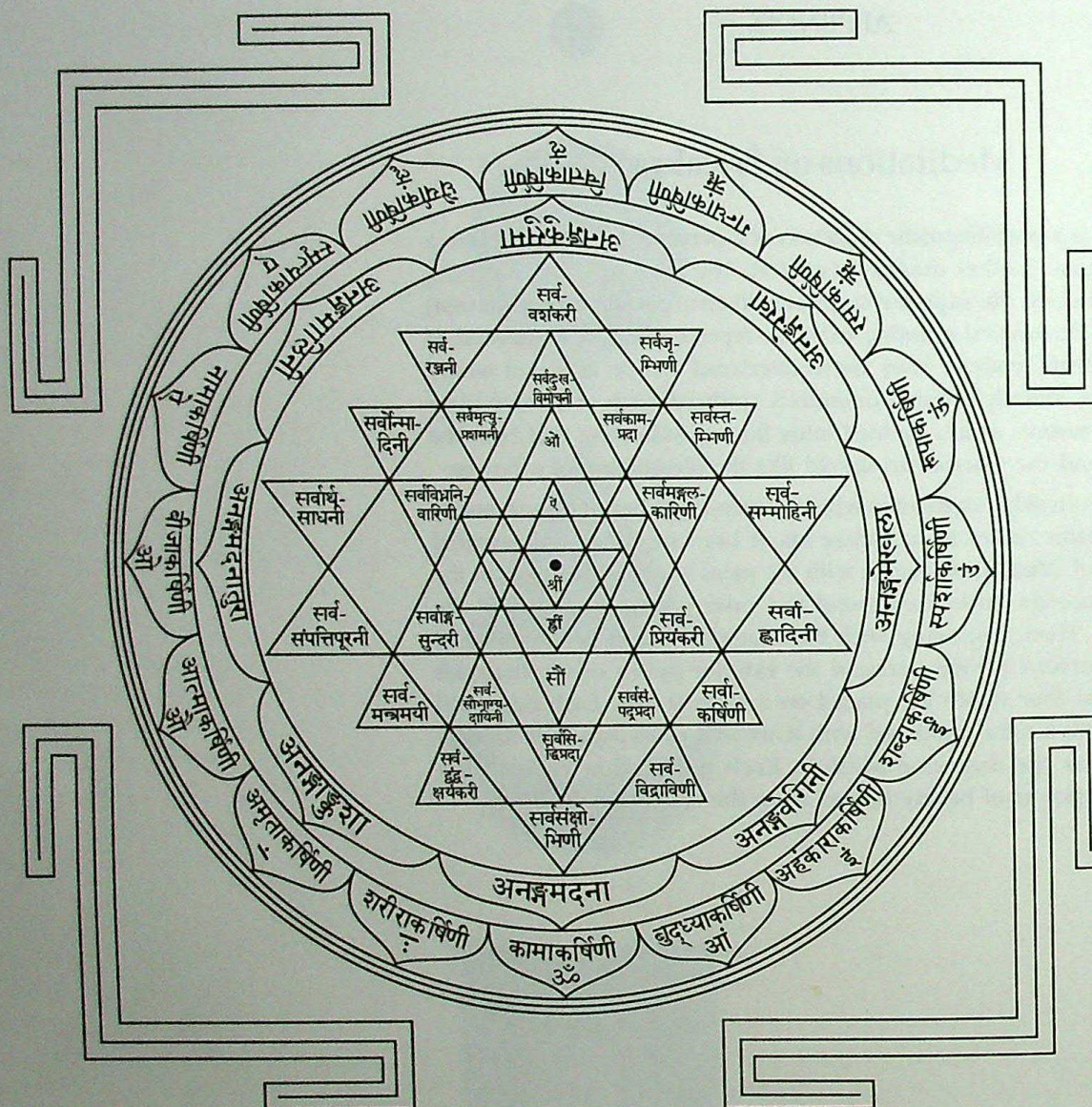


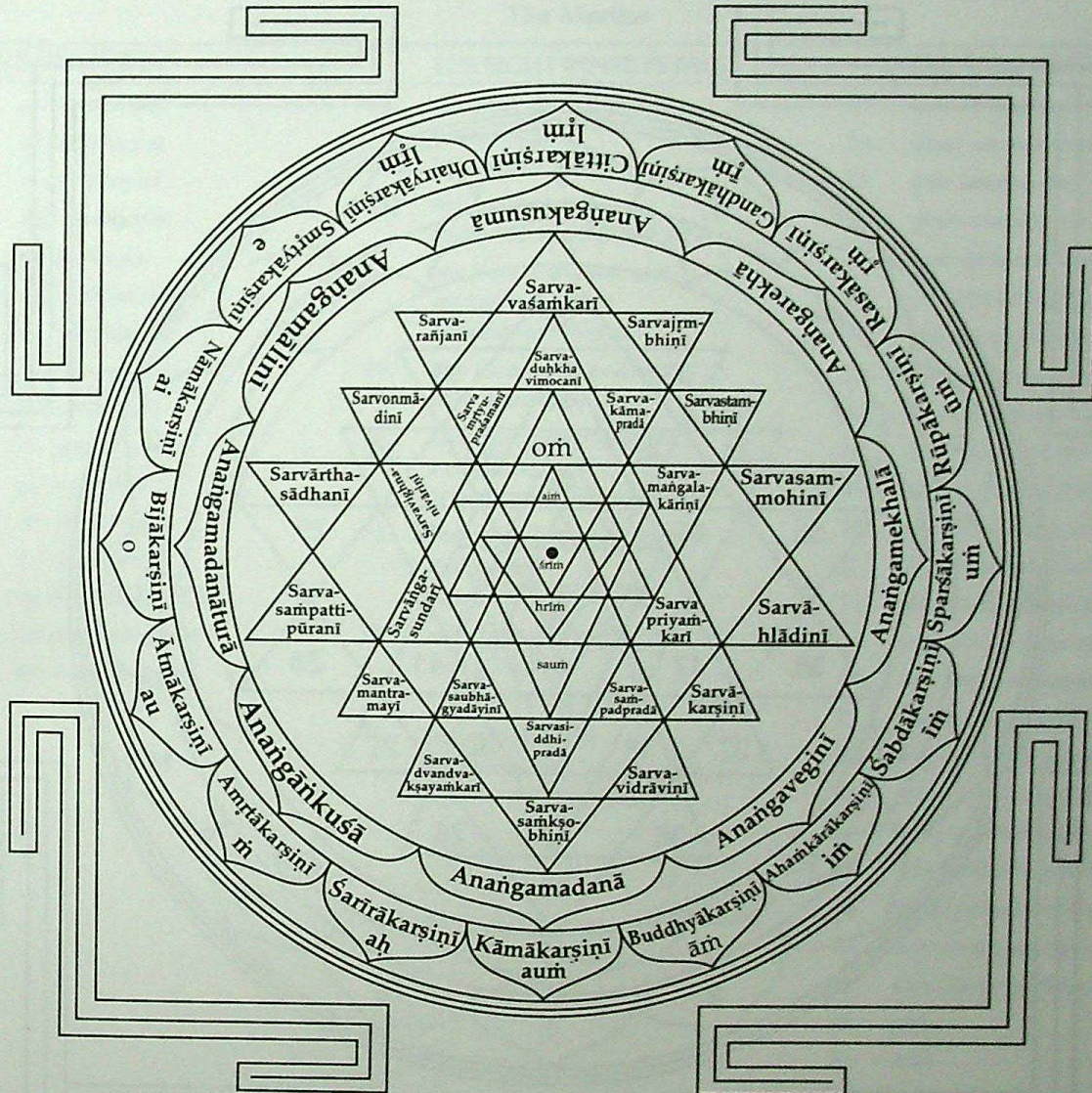
APPENDIX

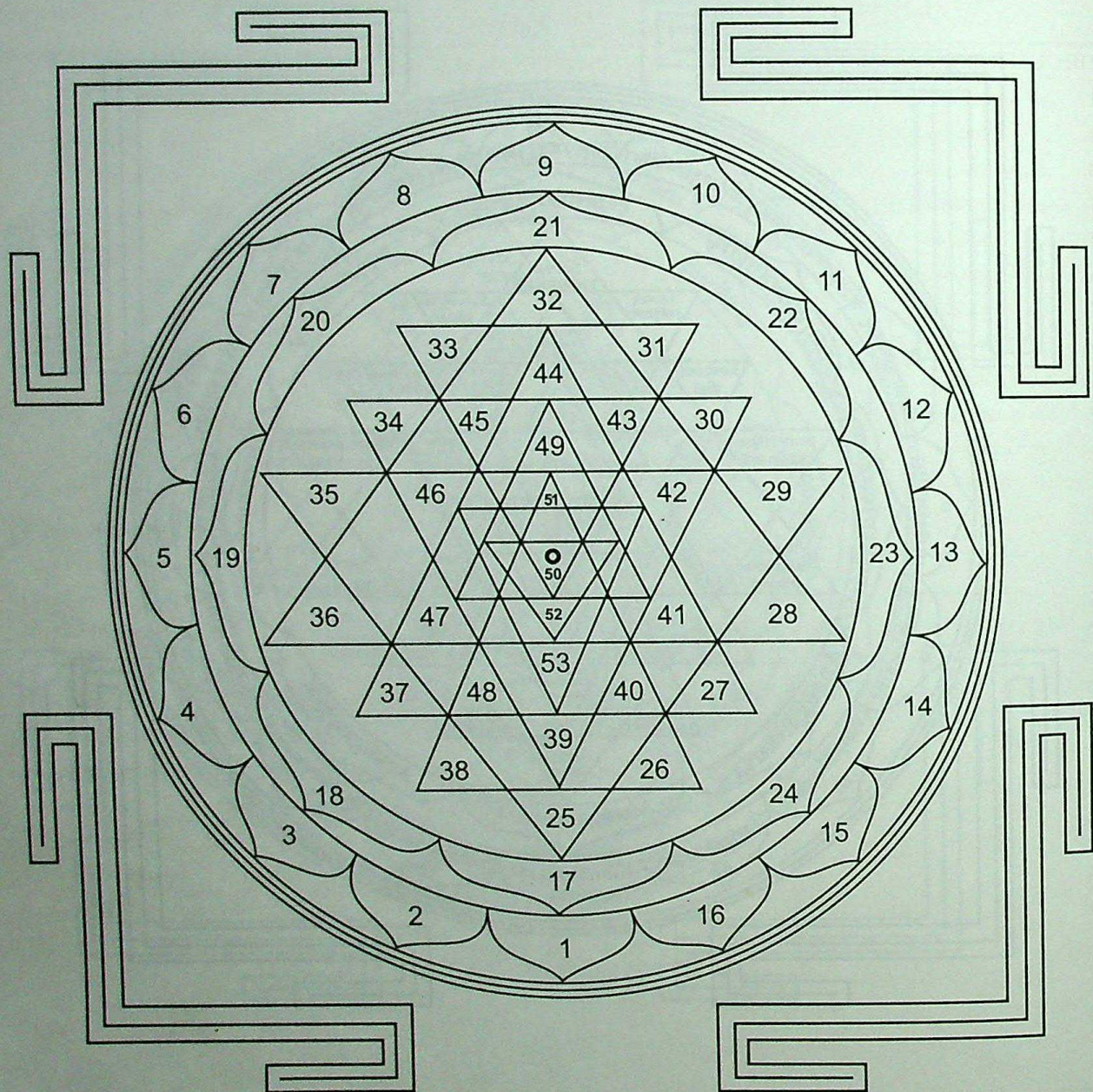
Meditations on Śrīcakra

The *Śrīcakra* is a protolinguistic depiction of a person functioning within a cosmic system. In this diagram (*yantra*), the four upward-pointing triangles represent the supreme spirit or universal consciousness (*puruṣa*) and the five downward-pointing triangles represent nature composed of the five elements (*prakṛti*). They are so interlaced that no aspect of reality can be seen as entirely physical or entirely spiritual. Each of the two rings of petals represents a fully-opened lotus flower, indicating that both the microcosm and the macrocosm unfold like the blossoming of a flower.

Śrīcakra is an aid to meditation which is intended to become unnecessary as the meditator comes to recognize his or her functional and essential unity with All. Meditation begins with the petal at the alpha point of the diagram, proceeds clockwise around the outer petals, then around the inner petals. Then, beginning with the triangles placed at the alpha, it proceeds counter-clockwise around the exterior points of the triangles until the final four which are placed on a vertical axis. Each petal and point has a *bija-mantra* associated with it, as well as an aspect of divinity envisioned as the Supreme Mother. Each meditation reflects the transcendent power of beauty to lead us to the oneness of Reality.







The Mantras

THE OUTER PETALS	THE EIGHT INNER PETALS	THE TRIANGLES
1. <i>aṁ kāmākaraṣiṇī</i>	17. <i>ṭaṁ ṭhaṁ ḍaṁ ḍhaṁ ṇaṁ</i> <i>anaṅgamadanā</i> <i>kulasundarī tvaritā</i>	25. <i>kaṁ sarvasaṁkṣobhiṇī</i>
2. <i>aḥ śarīrākaraṣiṇī</i>		26. <i>khaṁ sarvavidrāviṇī</i>
3. <i>m̐ amṛtākaraṣiṇī</i>	18. <i>ṣaṁ ṣaṁ saṁ haṁ</i> <i>anaṅgāṅkuṣā nīlapatākā nityā</i>	27. <i>gaṁ sarvākaraṣiṇī</i>
4. <i>auṁ ātmākaraṣiṇī</i>	19. <i>taṁ thaṁ daṁ dhaṁ naṁ</i> <i>anaṅgamadanātūrā</i> <i>sarvamaṅgalā vijayā</i>	28. <i>ghaṁ sarvāhlādini</i>
5. <i>oṁ bijākaraṣiṇī</i>		29. <i>ṇaṁ sarvasammohini</i>
6. <i>aiṁ nāmākaraṣiṇī</i>	20. <i>śaṁ kṣaṁ anaṅgamālinī</i> <i>citrā jvālāmālinī</i>	30. <i>caṁ sarvastambhiṇī</i>
7. <i>eṁ smṛtyākaraṣiṇī</i>	21. <i>kaṁ khaṁ gaṁ ghaṁ ṇaṁ</i> <i>anaṅgakusumā</i> <i>kāmeśvarī mahātripurasundarī</i>	31. <i>chaṁ sarvajrmbhiṇī</i>
8. <i>lṛṁ dhairyākaraṣiṇī</i>		32. <i>jaṁ sarvavaśaṁkarī</i>
9. <i>lṛṁ cittākaraṣiṇī</i>	22. <i>paṁ phaṁ baṁ bhaṁ maṁ</i> <i>anaṅgarekhā</i> <i>nityaklinnā bhagamālinī</i>	33. <i>śaṁ sarvaraṅjani</i>
10. <i>ṛṁ gandhākaraṣiṇī</i>		34. <i>jñaṁ sarvonmādinī</i>
11. <i>ṛṁ rasākaraṣiṇī</i>	23. <i>caṁ chaṁ jaṁ jhaṁ ṇaṁ</i> <i>anaṅgamekhalā</i> <i>vahnivāsini bheruṇḍī</i>	35. <i>ṭaṁ sarvārthasādhani</i>
12. <i>ūṁ rūpākaraṣiṇī</i>		36. <i>ṭhaṁ sarvasampattipūrani</i>
13. <i>uṁ sparsākaraṣiṇī</i>	24. <i>yaṁ raṁ laṁ vaṁ</i> <i>anaṅgaveginī</i> <i>śivadūtī mahāvidyeśvarī</i>	37. <i>ḍaṁ sarvamantramayī</i>
14. <i>īṁ śabdākaraṣiṇī</i>		38. <i>ḍhaṁ sarvadvandvākṣayaṁkarī</i>
15. <i>iṁ ahaṁkāraṣiṇī</i>		39. <i>ṇaṁ sarvasiddhipradā</i>
16. <i>āṁ buddhyākaraṣiṇī</i>		40. <i>taṁ sarvasampadpradā</i>
		41. <i>thaṁ sarvapriyaṁkarī</i>
		42. <i>daṁ sarvamaṅgalakāriṇī</i>
		43. <i>dhaṁ sarvakāmapradā</i>
		44. <i>naṁ sarvaduḥkhavimocanī</i>
		45. <i>paṁ sarvamṛtyuprasāmanī</i>
		46. <i>phaṁ sarvaviḡghanivārini</i>
		47. <i>baṁ sarvāṅgasundarī</i>
		48. <i>bhaṁ sarvasaubhāgyaddayini</i>
		49. <i>auṁ</i>
		50. <i>śrīm̐</i>
		51. <i>aiṁ</i>
		52. <i>hrīm̐</i>
		53. <i>sauṁ</i>

Verse One

aṁ kāmākarṣiṇī

O Creatress of affective endearment. O Mother, in you I see the perennial conjoining of the infinite, revealed through the law of harmony and attributed to Parameśvara, and of the unceasing actualization of every mode of value. Each value is graced by your enchanting touch which beautifies the past, the present and the future.

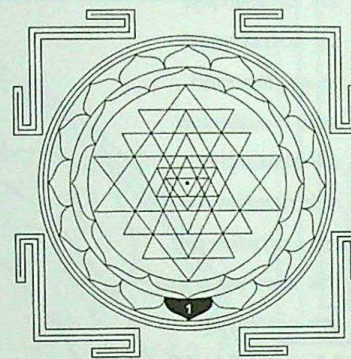
O radiant effulgence, the Supreme Spirit that animates all the changing formations of nature, my obeisance to your lotus feet. I am both innocent and ignorant. Even then it is clear to me that I am a spark in the glowing fire of your affection for the Supreme Lord.

In the garden of Kailāsa, the Lord is likened to a tree which fulfills all desires, and you are described as a golden creeper that entwines the tree. I am a bud blossoming on that creeper of enchantment.

When I chant the *mantra aṁ kāmākarṣiṇī*, let my mind be filled with only desirable objects of value. Let those objects be in resonance with such *dharma* that will give covetable meaning to everyone of my aspirations, which I am desiring to actualize with your grace. Let each such desire be a fresh flower of immaculate purity that I can offer to you with my deepest love and devotion.

Each *dharma* in me is a seed of your intention that you have sown in my heart with special love and care. Let not the sprouting and growth of those seeds of virtue be choked by the unwelcome proliferation of the thorny weeds of vices. Help me to prune out of my thoughts, words and actions anything that arises that might alienate me from you. May your intelligence ever guide me in exercising my moral and spiritual discrimination. Let every assignment given to me be a vehicle to ride in the right direction, so that I arrive at the blessed fulfillment of my life.

In my ignorance and selfishness I may desire that which you disapprove of. When such a failure comes, let me immediately recognize that my desire is not in resonance with your grace. Only then can I correct myself and be disciplined. When a spark of your effulgence gives a twinkle to my eye, when your prompting gives a truthful presentation to my words, and when a lease of energy that you channel into me makes my



1. अं कामाकर्षिणी

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actions noble, only then will I consider myself a deserving receptacle to hold out your grace to all around me. Let the only desire in me be the desire to become forever and ever your worthy instrument.

May the conjoined love of Śiva and Śakti bless me so that I recognize in my parents the physical manifestation of your union in spirit. May I ever be grateful to them.

It is from the finitude of the dust of your lotus feet that the Creator has fashioned this body of mine and this home of my worthy shelter, the good earth, that has become my haven in this life. May I live here as long as you wish in the certitude of the knowledge you give me and experiencing the refuge of fearlessness which you so easily grant.

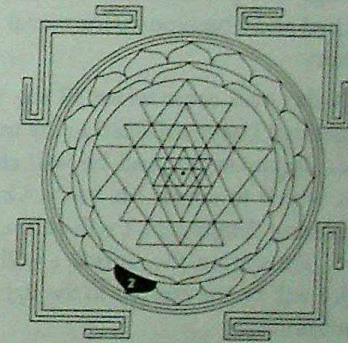
॥ aṁ kāmākaraṣiṇī ॥

Verse Two

aḥ śarīrākaraṣiṇī

O Beautifier of the triple cities! Assigning to each being a body, you have created this world, and you are preserving the mode of each one. I incline before you forever with gratitude. Great is your compassion. The sperm and the egg which remained as mere potentials in the core locus, *bindu*, of the union of Śiva and Śakti are specified and commissioned by you with your irresistible power of attraction. You requited a nucleus that was to develop into a being endowed with an animated body equipped with the organs of sensory perception, the organs of action, and the fourfold mechanism of its inner organ. As desired and directed by you, this unicellular body grew and evolved into this being of mine with its several invaluable facilities.

Just as Viriñci (the Creator) has taken the fine dust from your lotus feet, and through a process of elaboration is ceaselessly creating the bodies of this universe, in his compassion he has included me also in his creation as a humble creature of the multitudes that have come to live upon the face of this earth. Without any motivation or any recognition of myself, I lay in the womb of my mother in the deep silence of the unconscious. In those days you fashioned within me the faculties of my senses and



2. अः शरीराकर्षिणी

meticulously arranged for the co-ordination of my limbs. While assuming this body, I was all alone. It was in such a mysterious way that you made me a person and brought me to this world of time and space to share my smiles and tears with the innumerable other creatures with which you have festooned your museum of creation.

In the infinitude of space and the deep sleep of consciousness you caused a stir, and that stir has become the reverberating wave, the primordial mechanism of creation. The vibrations of space came with a melody with which the frequency of one became distinct from another. Thus I have come to a world of articulated sounds. Soon you gave me the intelligence to distinguish the tonality of one pitch from another and the implied meaning of every sound. The meaning of each sound came to stay with me as variegated concepts ready to impregnate percepts with an existential reality.

Thus I became a co-creator of Brahmā. I am adding to the glory of this world with metaphors and similes. Thus the world in which I live is assuming at each moment a poetic dimension and lyrical excellence. Through the proliferation of conceptualizer gestalts my memory is enriched and I become instrumental in serving Viṣṇu, the lord of dynamic memory.

A day will come when all the worthless, fragmentary thoughts and images that I have collected in my mind will be gathered by your Supreme Lord, Parameśvara, and he will change them into the indistinct ashes with which to smear his body. On that day of great dissolution when everything disappears, I will still remain as dust on the forehead of your Lord. Thus from the unreal I will be transferred to the real, from the dark I will be transferred to the light, and from death I will be transferred to immortality.

Thus, O Mother, my intimacy with you will never be lost. Even in the deluge of the cycle of creation, along with you I will be going into the deep unconscious which is the true state of your being.

॥ aḥ śarīrākaraṣiṇī ॥

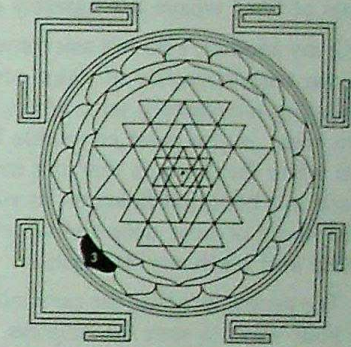
Verse Three

m̐ amṛtākaraṣiṇī

O eternal Mother, who is always showering the sweet elixir of immortality, you have ordained me to come to this world of your changing flux as a mere flicker. From where do I come? Into what am I disappearing? I do not know. You have given me this temporary habitation in a crumbling body. However transitory life is here, there are many indications that you are changeless and that there is a continuity in the magical performance of your phenomenal drama.

In spite of my uninstructed senses and undisciplined mind, I know that what illuminates my senses and what enables me to decipher the mystery of your being are always coming to me from the benign shower of your mercy. Perhaps the limitations you have imposed on my being by providing a horizon of ignorance is to specify my identity with the individuation of an embodied being. That gives me a vantage point to stand apart as a person and adore you with words of praise, which well up in my heart as my irresistible love for you. This finitude, which is like a water molecule in the expanse of the ocean of your eternal reality, confers on me the special ability to associate with you as a lover, rather than being merged in the blissful unity of love.

The ego, its constricting hell and demonic counterpart are all the creation of nescience. Even in the darkest moment of my terrifying ignorance, I can feel under my feet the stable foundation of your support. I know that you will wake me from such a nightmare to enjoy the freedom of the vastness of your friendly home which is decorated with the sun and moon and the shimmering stars of the sky. Night after night you summon me to leave the humble dwelling of my body so that I can merge with you and remain in the incessant peace of your undisturbed quietude. You do not keep me waiting until the termination of a cycle of life to reach the shores of redemption. The deepest sleep into which I plunge, leaving the carcass of my ego hushed in an inertial body, does not cause me any concern or anxiety. However disturbing and uncomfortable the functional actualities of my body are, it is ever under your care and you take heed of it while I sleep. When the golden sun rises in the east, you cause him to tickle and animate my body and bring me back to the program of the day's work. Thus night after night you cradle me in peaceful sleep,



3. अं: अमृताकर्षिणी

and day after day you fill my cup with the lust for life. When I wake up in the morning, it is as if I have come to own the reality of the wakeful world. I take on one responsibility after another, and with the sequential events of life I weave the tapestry of my delight.

O my Mother, I do not ask for jewelery and riches but I expect you to give me a transparency of vision and a certitude of truth. The crest jewel of wisdom (*cintāmaṇi*), with which you decorate your children to make them wise, is the most covetable boon that one can expect from you. Even when the ocean is vast and its depth is unfathomable, if I can safely crouch in a boat that floats on its surface, I do not have to worry how far is the shore or how deep the water is. With the oar of my hope, I shall paddle and reach my destination.

The problems of life are perennial and extremely intriguing. But simple are your ways to save the helpless, on whom you cast the glance of your preference. You have the right to push a wave back into the ocean's blue depth and raise another to be gold-crested in the beam of the morning sun. You are the sovereign and your game is the game of sovereignty. How easy it is to love your truth, your wisdom and your beauty, and to inherit all that you have. You are rich by nature and rich by grace, so with confidence let me rest my head in your lap and once again go to my joyous peace.

॥ *m̐ amṛtākaraṣiṇī* ॥

Verse Four

aum ātmākaraṣiṇī

O Mother of omniscience, whose presence illuminates the being of all, although stuck in nescience, may I be worthy to be the finite counterpart of your omnipresent knowledge. Your two feet are the ever-abiding serenity of the Supreme Lord Śiva and the ever-actualizing dynamics of the universal creatress. You have allowed the flame borrowed from the celestial fire of the Lord to burn in me as my mind, my intelligence and also my ego-affection. And, on your own, you have blessed me with the concreteness of my body, the sap of life circulating within it and the burning flames of my psycho-spiritual urges. I am endowed with a space of freedom within which to enact the drama of my life. I have restful habitation in the lap of your loving care.

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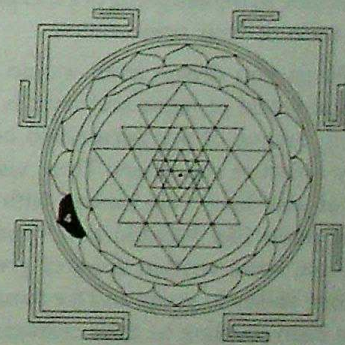
I know you are not watching my clumsy behavior to take me to task, but you are certainly interested in my one-pointed attention, *śraddhā*, so that I always understand your intention correctly. A person is a personification of his knowledge, so, my Mother, when you enter within me, may you be the enlightening knowledge of my Self.

To propitiate gods, people make sacrifices and offerings of gifts and perform austerities. Hating someone is not your nature. You cannot love anyone more because you have bestowed on everyone more love than they can ever accept. So I do not have to satisfy conditions for us to relate to each other. If you are the lamp, I am its silver light. If you are the word, I am the meaning. Light cannot be wrapped and concealed within darkness. You are self-luminous by nature. If this body of mine is a temple in which you are enshrined as its eternal deity, even my deep unconscious is not a dungeon of darkness. I am filled with your intentions from my unconscious so that I can see the magic of your transformation, both in my dreams and in the actuality of life.

You are the embodiment of fearlessness. Finding refuge in you is to become absolutely liberated from fear. The Self is not afraid of the Self. Fear comes only from the non-Self (*anātma*). The impression of non-Self manifests only in ignorance. May you ward off from me the apprehension of the non-Self. The sun and moon are shining as your watchful eyes. They are not only luminaries which throw light on our paths and illuminate objects for us. They are also caretakers of our bodies and souls.

You rejoice in rewarding us for even the little we do on our own to improve the lot of this world. Where we plant one seed or a sapling you multiply it a thousandfold that is a magic which no farmer can perform without your connivance. When you share your sunlight, water and fresh air, you do not decree that it should be enjoyed only by the learned, the wise and the good. Anyone to whom you have granted the gift of life is also entitled to enjoy the entire bounty of your creation. Even before I came to know of my existence, you were thoughtful to equip me with all devices so that I can make every moment meaningful and perfect to its maximum approximation. Mother, I take refuge in your lotus feet which are none other than the feet of the Lord.

॥ *auri ātmākārṣiṇi* ॥



4. ओं आत्माकर्षिणी

Verse Five

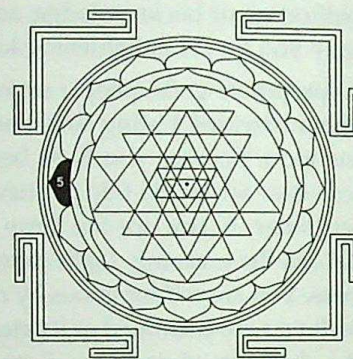
om bijākarṣiṇī

You are the primeval seed of this entire universe. You are also the cosmic womb from which everything is projected. There is no single effect which has not come from you. Without any destruction whatsoever, they all merge back into you. O Mother having condensed me into the seed of so many forms, into how many wombs have you deposited me and from how many mothers have you brought me forth like the blossoming of a new flower? At your behest Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara are always engaged in creation, subsistence and dissolution. Even though Viṣṇu is the overlord of the past, present and future, in a split second you transformed him into a beautiful enchanting female. You changed the god of gods, Sarveśvara, who was never disturbed by erotics, into an infatuated lover. Thus there is nothing which you cannot bring about with your *yoga-māyā*.

You retain the triple modes of nature, and you are ever the embellisher of the three worlds: the heavens, the atmosphere and the earth, as also the past, present and future. Today what is dormant in my unconscious as a seed is tomorrow my conscious idea, my working program and my accomplishment. When a seed germinates, no one can anticipate how many leaves will come from it in the course of its vertical growth and in the horizontal spreading out of its branches. Even more abundant are the conceptual sprouts you generate in my unconscious. From inside you instruct me in the assigning of concept to percept and how I should christen each form of your presentation.

When you dream from within me, corresponding to the dream a magical world of name and form is spread out around me. Like the all-tasting tongue of my personified being, my senses reach out and taste every object of enjoyment. Thus, instead of being assailed by one joyous part of your love, I am blessed with a million varied forms of enjoyment. Great poets like Vālmiki and Vyāsa, infatuated by the beauty of your creation, have written epics of great magnitude to approximate their creative ability to yours and for thousands of years connoisseurs of beauty have been reveling in their creations.

It is your great sport that after unfurling the bounty of your joyous



5. ओं बीजाकर्षिणी

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beauty, you withdraw everything back into the power of your obscurity. The form returns to the word. The word merges in the sound. The sound is silenced in the mind. The mind is withdrawn into the vital breath (*prāṇa*) and *prāṇa* becomes undifferentiated in the warmth of your thermal glow (*tejas*). Ultimately, everything goes back into your effulgence, which is none other than Śiva *caitanya*. O primeval Mother, cause of all causes, you punctuate your transformation with a pause of transcendence.

॥ om bijākarṣiṇī ॥

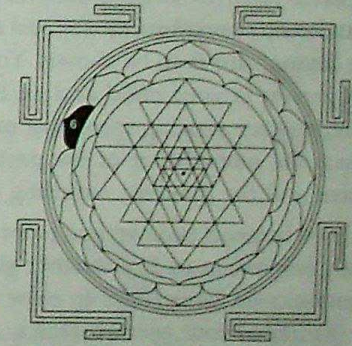
Verse Six

aiṁ nāmākarṣiṇī

O Goddess of the eternal sound, your dynamics are of Śiva's bow. You select words of your choice as arrows, and from your bow you are shooting them into my realm of consciousness. An arrow can wound the body but your arrows bring to my mind the elixir of immortality. They fill me with ecstasy. O Mother, veritable incarnation of love, every word brings to me a hymn praising your excellence. It is like a blossoming flower of Spring. Its fragrance fills the air that I breathe. It is beautiful to my eyes; its honey is sweet. The earth that is scorched with the hot sun and the vegetation which is about to wither are revived by the cool breeze of the Malaya mountains. Even so are your words: every word with which you are praised is like a gentle breeze wafting in my life.

O daughter of the Himavān, like the compassionate tears of the snowy mountain, the heavenly Gaṅgā comes to this earth. It revives the land and grows food for millions. With food the body is nourished. Even so, O Mother of all sciences, poetry and music, you create a flood of delight in every connoisseur's mind.

The words that transpire between two people are like the disembodied god of love, Anaṅga. The word cannot be seen with the eyes, but it brings understanding between hearts. A word of love is like a hand stretched in friendship. It is with your word that we correct each other, give assurance to each other and share the ecstasy of our inner selves. When heartless people give war cries and advance to attack, you come with your charming smile that disarms them. To them you give your gentle word which brings peace and serenity to their minds.



6. ऐं नामाकर्षिणी

From your lyre the enthralling music of the spirit rises and fills the world with its melody. When people are physically tired, mentally frustrated and hopelessly want to terminate their lives, you come as a *guru* and give the eternally shining word to light the lamp of their wisdom which remains as your guidance forever in them. Such is your compassion, O Word incarnate.

॥ aiṁ nāmākaraṣiṇī ॥

Verse Seven

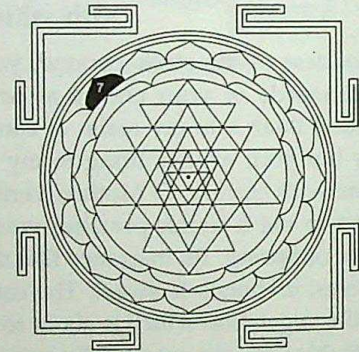
em smṛtyākaraṣiṇī

O Mother, you are the transparency of pure consciousness. You are the magnetic field of cosmic memory. You are like a housewife who meticulously remembers all day and all night the sequential order in which your loving care is to be shown. You do that for the entire world, as if each person is your child and each home is yours. Established in the future, you are sending sprouts of memories to the present. Thus you are at once the embellisher of the past, the enhancer of the beauty of the present and the dynamic unfurling of the future.

Even before it is dawn you paint the eastern skies with magenta colors which bespeak to us that another glorious day is at hand. You have also commissioned your cocks to crow and declare the gospel of each new day. You send your gentle breeze to rouse buds which are ready to unfold. Before the arrival of the sun, mist comes and leaves dew drops on every petal to enhance their beauty. Men and women who are tired and lost in deep sleep are called back to the new day. When the world wakes up, your cows are there with their udders full of sweet milk.

Then the program begins. You are the programmer. Millions are your instruments, but each person thinks that he or she is doing his or her ambitious work. You allow them to have that identity and just go on inspiring them to complete whatever they are doing in the busy world. All are pacing their steps in tune with your ceaseless dance. Millions are the variations of the sounds of the silver bells attached to your anklets.

O enriching Mother, everywhere one can see the semblance of your nourishing breasts. Poets see them in the foreheads of elephants. It is a



7. एं स्मृत्याकर्षिणी

mystery that your middle cannot be seen from full moon to new moon in its waning, and new moon to full moon in its waxing. You make all the variations of sine curves. In the process of transformation you keep your rhythm. Sometimes you let us go as free as freedom can; then you bind us and take us around by a leash. Sometimes you allow us to enjoy abandon. At other times you are insistent that we should confront the inevitable.

You preserve such a vast history for us that not a single incident registered in the memory of the countless million beings is allowed to perish. A written book is your best symbol. Everything written and explained offers a new challenge to us. We are asked to revise, revalue and restate. Again and again your husband, the Great Dissolver, regenerates the vacuum, the cosmic *pralaya*. Like the world reappearing at the opening of the eyes, you re-establish everything in its fullest glory. You are the Tripurasundari.

॥ *em smṛtyākarṣiṇī* ॥

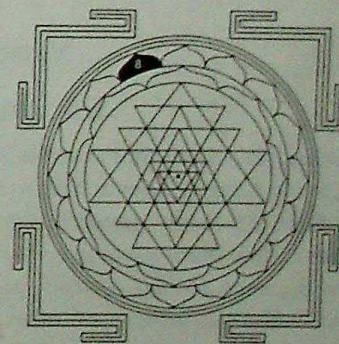
Verse Eight

līm dhairyākarṣiṇī

O Mother, you ride on a lion of great strength and valor. You are seated on a couch which is of the form of Śiva. Your throne is none other than the lap of your Lord Parameśvara. You are the queen of all queens. How can I be afraid when I follow you, holding with trust your little finger in my hand?

By shining in the firmament the sun showers solar energy to animate all living being on earth. Even so are you the incarnation of the magic syllable, *aum*. With your own radiance we are also shining forth as beams of your effulgence. You have kindly vested in each of us the capability to hold the elixir of your wisdom.

You have made us intelligent beings. The truly brave one is intelligent. It is to your intelligence that everything in the world adheres. The child sleeping in the lap of the mother is not afraid of anyone. You are brave and fearless because you are seated in the lap of your Lord. As for us individuated beings, we are laid in the lap of the three *guṇas*. Once in a while *sattva* shines in us. Then we also feel brave and see your reassuring



8. लृ धैर्याकर्षिणी

smile. But when *rajas* and *tamas* cloud our vision, we are rocked by the storms of uncertainty. Then we lose comprehension of you and fall into distress.

Even when a person is comfortably sleeping on his cosy bed, wrapped in warm clothes, he can get a nightmare and shriek in fear. But, on waking up he realizes what he experienced was only a figment of his mind. Then he regains his clarity and becomes strong again. My prayer is that every time I slip into the darkness of the lower regions of mind you will wake me up. Allow me to share the eternal transparency of your intelligence. One's ego becomes a devil only in the dark. Fear is a product of ignorance. I am so grateful to you that you send us an appropriate means at a right time to dispel our darkness.

Bless me, Mother, to see you always seated in the island of rubies which is in the ocean of Śivānanda. May I see you seated in the shrine of *cintāmaṇi* which is in the lovely forest of *kadamba* trees. May I always see you absorbed in the bliss of *cidānanda*. That will give me my life's fulfillment. You are the light of my intelligence. In the waves of ecstasy that come from your grace, may I laugh and play around like an innocent baby.

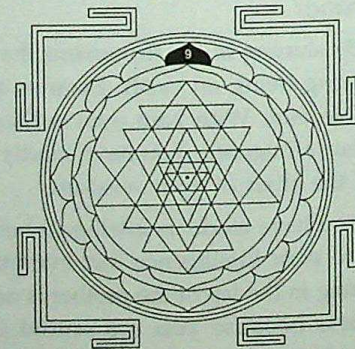
॥ *lṛm dhairyākaraṣiṇī* ॥

Verse Nine

lṛm cittākaraṣiṇī

O Mother, who is ever immersed in the bliss of the Self, the base foundation of all living beings is your matchless radiance. Some beings stand stationary with their feet firmly rooted in the *terra firma*. Folks call them trees and creepers. Then there are others who live in the watery expanses you have given us, such as fish, whales, porpoises, crocodiles and other water animals. Human beings and other land animals are comparatively less restricted. We run around from place to place. The birds are freer still to fly in the sky.

You have given us many habitations of panoramic beauty and you provide us with sustenance which we can easily find. You have taught us how to gather around a hearth and make a family. All day we have a witness of all our actions — the sun in the firmament. We forget the



9. लृं चित्ताकर्षिणी

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scorching heat of the day on seeing the cool sheen of the moon and the shimmering light of the stars. Such is the care you have shown to us, O Mother who never forgets anything.

You have given us eyes to appreciate, a nose to smell and a mouth to relish all delicious food which comes like a divine magic to our tables every day. You have given us receptive hearts which are always willing to accept the love of all beings around us with the same ease that we allow the over-brimming love of our hearts to flow into others. Your honey is sitting in our throats; when we speak, the sweetness of your love trickles with our words. Sitting in the center of our hearts, you take charge of our lives and give your commands. Closely watching your likes and dislikes, we make our bodies worthy instruments to carry out your errands.

You have made my heart full of treasures of the finest values you approve of. Also I have the inheritance of unequalled wisdom which you have channeled from the seers of the past. My Heart, I pray that you give me strength to show my reverence and devotion to my heritage of wisdom. Let the finest wisdom you have taught to your devotees sit in the center of my eyebrows and give me guidance.

Even when I wander in the wilderness of horizontality, my base foundation (*mūlādhāra*) will also remain firm in you. My remembrance of your ever-pure intention is the cleansing agent with which my heart is always kept pure and simple. My memories are the finest flowers I offer to you both in the dawn and in the dusk. As days pass by, I become a clean mirror to hold out your image for the entire world to see. Your blessings are with me.

॥ *īrṁ cittākārṣiṇī* ॥

Verse Ten

īrṁ gandhākārṣiṇī

O joyous Mother, you are the smile on all lips. You are the thrill in every heart. All the cycles of the universe that have blossomed and drooped have their imperishable essence in the four Vedas of the transactional, the dreaming, the deep sleep and the transcendental. It is from these

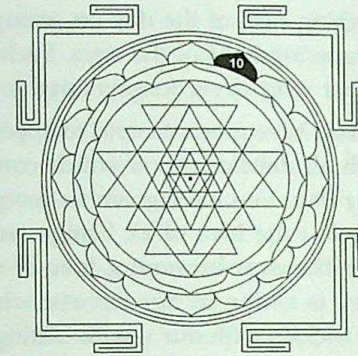
Vedas you draw the ideas of your creation to present, like a kaleidoscope, a newly-structured design, novel in form, unique in color or impression and suggestive of fresh meanings of archetypes.

To see your bliss manifest in the simplest of forms, you have created this concrete universe with a mountain there, a blue sky beyond and shimmering stars in the sky. You take as much care to decorate a violet or the wings of a butterfly. Thus from the far-off sky you make a descending slope of your creation to where we sit here on the lawn where every blade of grass has its stipulated dewdrop mirroring the entire universe. You enter into its countless gross creations and make each one a symbol of a pure idea of beauty or goodness. Where you are gross, there you are also subtle, and your subtlety becomes evanescent and transcendental.

Rising step by step from the base foundation (*mūlādhāra*), when your creation comes to the peak of the thousand-petaled (*sahasrāra*), all spoken words melt in the silence of your heavenly choir. The earth under our feet, rushing torrents of rivers, leaping flames, ceaseless winds, the vast sky, the ocean and its waves, the knower in me and my desires to act and accomplish, all rise into the heaven beyond, leaving nothing but the pure awareness of the brilliant word.

As the beautifier of the three worlds, you have this universe for a studio, and you use our imaginative minds as your colorful brushes to paint a million panoramas each day in colors bright and dark. Our tireless efforts to cope with your commands are rivaled by the chirping birds, the flowering trees and the bees that gather honey. When the sun sets you do not abandon this world to the tyranny of darkness. You give it a mystical look by bringing the moon each night in a different shape and your twinkling stars which look for their corresponding eyes to whisper a secret to.

You make the entire world a cradle for your babies to lie in with their eyes closed and dream the most lyrical themes which even poets cannot conceive. Your magic is such that even the cruelest person and one who is hardened by the stubborn facts of life changes into a model of innocence when you give the tender touch of sleep. So, my dear Mother, I also seek the comfort of your fondling, night after night when my limbs are tired and I retire.



10. ॐ गन्धाकर्षिणी

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When I wake up each morning, please make me as fresh as a flower and as brilliant as the morning sun. The flower has its fragrance. The sun has its effulgence. May I bring your light and fragrance to the world with my bright disposition and sweet words emerging from the depth of truth. The wind comes and gathers the smell of flowers and takes them away. Like that, let each night gather my awareness to rest in your care and let the following day bring it back to me as my certitude which will keep me as wise as you want me to be.

॥ ॠm gandhākarṣiṇī ॥

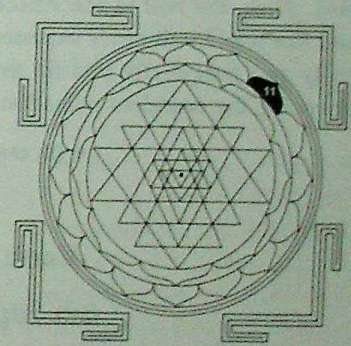
Verse Eleven

ॠm rasākarṣiṇī

O Mother, you delight in everything and you are the delight of all. From a central point you magically move without moving and cause lines, triangles, and circles. You make all geometrical figures, simple and complex, and your several *maṇḍalas* make this vast universe. When I praise you with my words I see you as the delightful essence of the four *śiva-tattvas* and the five *śaktitattvas*.

A child forgets himself or herself in the lap of the mother. The heart of that joy is fearlessness. The lap of the Mother is differently called the Kingdom of God (the *tuṣṭita* heaven). It was in your zest that your Lord emptied the cup of poison and became Śrī Kaṇṭha. Thus, he has become the only Lord of you and me and the entire world. Although every atom is suggestive of the dance of Śiva, he is also the unmoved Mover, the ever-effulgent radiance of truth, Sadāśiva. He has transformed half of his existential reality into you. Thus you have become our Parameśvari, supreme controller and protectress.

When in the deep darkness of the indiscernible a stir is produced by the Lord's intention to create, the here and the beyond get separated. Science and nescience come like a spontaneous dichotomy. From the seat of silence articulated words vibrate and come into the open. They can again be called back into silence. Such is your delight. Even when a spoken word is hushed into silence, its meaning will go on flashing until its place is taken by another configuration. Out of the perishable you make the



11. ॠm रसाकर्षिणी

imperishable. Through word symbols I receive the imperishable and treasure it in my memory to pass on to posterity.

After spreading over your godliness, pure wisdom and phenomenal magic, you give all this an existential presence with the quantification of the elements: space (*ākāśa*), air (*vāyu*), fire (*agni*), water (*jala*), and earth (*prthvī*). However great is the world you have created, I am invested with such receptors that I can epitomize and hold your entire creation as a thought, a dream or a fantasy. I see the world as the *Śrīcakra* which is at once the whole being as well as a cryptic symbol. Because of this interweaving of everything into everything, I see in my sensory pleasures, mental delights and intuitive ecstasies your changing moods and fluctuating realities.

You have no outside or inside. Although many are the attractions, the essential happiness (*rasa*) is your omnipresence. *Ānanda* is the Self (*ātman*). *Ātma*, the Self is the Absolute (*Brahman*). If my Self is always radiant like this, I will never experience any lacuna in my understanding. Spatially and temporally you fill my inside and outside so I am always experiencing the ceaseless pulsation (*trāsam*), of your *rasa*.

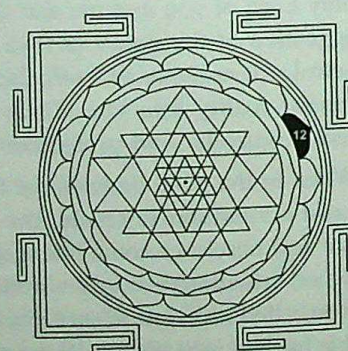
॥ *ṛm rasākaraṣiṇī* ॥

Verse Twelve

ūm rūpākaraṣiṇī

O Mother, the beautifier of the three worlds, countless are the dewdrops illuminated by the morning sun. At midday the same sun presents a world which is so different from the world revealed at dawn. The sky is repainted in crimson for the departure of the sun. The moon gives another dimension to the beauty of the world. Even though stars look minute, they are countless and nothing excels the starry heavens.

Thus, many are the themes of your beauty. However varied they are, the beauty in all these presentations is one and the same — it is your joyous smile reflected in so many mirrors. Poets and artists and connoisseurs of beauty are always aspiring to see a glimpse of you, but you are ever lost in the ecstasy of contemplating on the incomparable beauty of your Lord Śiva. Human beings and *devas*, shining gods of



12. *ॐ रूपकविणी*

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paradise, think that the best models of beauty are the dancing girls of Indra. They, in turn, are desirous of stealing one glance of your Lord, but they know it is impossible to see him without propitiating you.

When the creator Brahmā conceives a specially decorated dawn or the rich feast of a vernal forest, he meditates on you to draw inspiration for his creation. He considers your varying tastes in presenting beauty when he spills crimson in the floating clouds, fills a lotus pond with red and white lotuses or makes the jasmine flower so pure and simple with four white petals. Even when his creation transfigures according to the changing moods of the triple modalities of nature, you cannot be totally erased from behind your concealing veils.

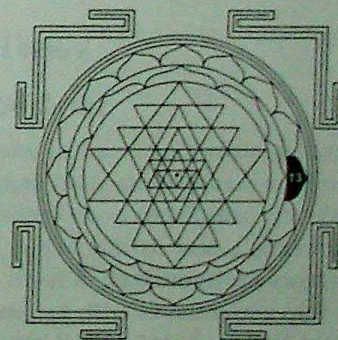
Many a beautiful world consisting of innumerable galactic systems is swallowed by cosmic dissolutions. Never getting tired of your creative urge, again you usher in another phenomenal world more beautiful than before. The craft of creation intrigues the minds of even small beings like a beaver building a dam, bird constructing a nest or a bee making a honeycomb. The places of worship which human beings have built all around the globe show how many are the dreams to which you have exposed the architects and the artisans of the world who give shape to its temples, cathedrals and *masjids*.

॥ ūm rūpākaraṣiṇī ॥

Verse Thirteen

ūm sparsākaraṣiṇī

O Mother, the bestowed of life, in the vast region of your vibrating voice, there is no distinction between the psychic space and the cosmic space. Your transcendental light descends as the energy of immanence and animates all beings in the phenomenal world. When the respirator of the body inspires and expires, the body becomes energetic to do all its functions. In the same manner you are respirating for the entire world. In fact, you are not a person out there. You are in our arteries and veins. You are reconnoitering our state of mind and body by passing through every nerve cell and capillary.



13. उं स्पर्शकरिणी

When fire burns and becomes a conflagration, the flame coming from polished wood and thorny bush is the same. It is bright and it is hot. That is all that matters. Although your grace is equally shared by all, those rare wise men who have attained a permanent foothold in the stable ground of your unflickering flame of wisdom can represent you to others. It is as if such a person can fetch your life-giving light to those in the dark.

When a child sucks its mother's breast it does not see the milk that goes into its mouth. It recognizes its nourishment only by its sweetness. No one has to teach the child how to concentrate on the milk it is sucking. It is with such a secret relationship that we enjoy your grace. It is not poured out into a chalice, rather it wells up in the cup.

The whole body is wrapped in one skin, the organ of touch. It becomes specialized in the eye as the lens, in the ear as the tympanum, in the tongue as taste buds, in the nose as olfactory nodules. The same fills the skull as the brain and branches off as sinuses. Like the lightening that suddenly appears and pierces through the dark ranges of clouds, you flicker and bring our inner illumination. There is no difference between a spark of fire and the sun that illuminates the whole world. Both are fire. You are the all-embracing Mother. Because of the infinite variegations of your manifestation, I often forget that you are the sapidity of water and the fragrance of the earth. May I realize that every touch is a tickling coming from the Absolute, *brahmasparśa*.

॥ um sparśākarṣiṇī ॥

Verse Fourteen

īm śabdākarṣiṇī

O Mother, streaming word of wisdom and joyous melody, out of the amorphous you generate vivid designs and explicit meaning. In my basic foundation (*mūlādhāra*) every sentient being in this world is a brother or sister to me, a dear darling to me. You have given me a language which has silence for its medium. It spells out my happiness and sorrow when it gets into communion with my sensory system. You have given me a language of symbols which is readily understood as my most powerful word of communication.

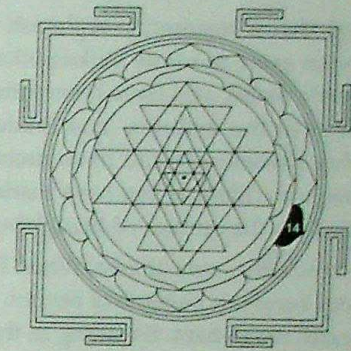
You have given me the language of the metaphor. Just as I can speak out with a brush or a pen, I can impress my thoughts in so many concealed ways. The proto-language you have given us has enriched our culture by enshrining symbols in our cathedrals and temples. Of the cosmic phenomena, we do not speak. Instead, we merge their presence in our joyous spirit. As the seers of the world we complement the scene with all the attributes we desire to see in it. Every language has within its effective marks your moving power. Therefore nothing lives for one second without representing one or another message that you are passing on to us.

When we sleep, and even when we are devoid of any consciousness, you do not leave us. As inert pieces of discarded instruments, you keep us alive in so many ways. You keep us busy with transactions in the wakeful, dreams in our sleep, and give us the power to become evanescent to fill your infinitude.

When the stir of a desire percolates into our psychic body from the transcendental source, you envelop it in such silence that it is not detected even when that sperm of energy is undergoing changes to become a future image. You do not take us into your confidence. You wrap each idea in the garment of vocabulary. Only finally when the breath carries the creations of our hearts into the larynx do they creep into the vocal system as actual sounds that can be pronounced. Even before we speak, you have decided what we should say, in which language. You use your own chosen words to string a sentence; its correct syntax and forceful logistics are all decided by you.

It is easy to see how you nourish us with the sweet milk of your breasts, but no one sees how you animate our organisms by infusing your breath into every self and by filling every labyrinth of our brain cells with such rich imagery that, as your instruments, we can bring forth imperishable poetry and perennial art. I do not know what I am surrounded by. You have a gentle way to relate me with my neighbors, the trees of my garden, the passing shadows of the road. Strongly attracting people with many demands around me, you put a gentle word in my mind to whisper to the blossoming flower, to turn my eyes to far-off stars to recognize their friendly twinkle.

You know how tired I am. You gently rub my eyelids and put them to sleep. While I sleep, you are busy transforming the food I eat into the



14. ई राब्दाकर्षिणी

energy that is required to replenish the deficiency of my body. You pour out your grace to me as Mukambika. From the first entry of sperm in my mother's ovum, you have been sitting right beside me watching over the growth of the embryo. You made sure that when I came out of my mother's womb I would have strong arms with which I could work. All through my lifetime you have made sure that I have strong legs to move around on the surface of this globe.

You are a perfectionist. When I came to the prime of youth, by your grace I became a paragon of beauty. Using your energy hidden in my navel to make me radiant. By sitting in the core of my psyche, you program the unfoldment of my personality. You make me sufficiently aggressive and fill me with unsatiated ambition. Nothing is too mean or worthless for me to desire. You always prompt me to go from one actualization to another.

How many varieties of rhythmic beat you are producing in my innate instruments of percussion! In my heart you are the diastole and systole; you are both my ascending and descending breath. Even in the wink of my eyes, the pace is meticulously rhythmic. You alternate my interests to resonate with the objective and to flow with the objective. My changing moods are like the elaboration of life's choreography.

You have divided my life into years, years into months, months into weeks, weeks into days, days into hours and hours into seconds. Each second is to be filled with the jubilation of the soul, a festivity of my mind's delight. Such is the rich life you have given me here on earth. No human mother can anywhere approximate the love and affection with which you care for my passing moments. Perhaps you are keeping a separate identity for you and me, so you can fondle me and I can cling to you with loving devotion.

॥ *īm śabdākaraṣiṇī* ॥

Verse Fifteen

īm ahaṁkāṛākaraṣiṇī

O Mother, the archetypal female person, when the indiscernible effulgence of eternal Śiva (Sadaśiva) impresses in your mirroring mind, the first ripple of phenomenality emerges from your core as *aham*, the I-

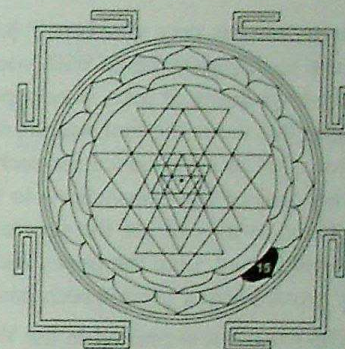
consciousness. From thereon, the entire universe arises from you as a continuous creation of your beauty sense. Thus, for the entire universe you became the pulsating central locus. As seasons change you reveal to the world your intentionality kept latent in the magic of each season. Your pain-pleasure philosophy of changing seasons is the eternal theme for artists and poets to dwell upon.

You are fond of contrasts. In the spring season you make trees and creepers overlaid with flowers. When summer comes you make all the flowers wither away, leaving in their places sweet edible fruits and nuts. The autumn is your time to distribute the abundant gifts of bumper crops. When you see the need of the world, you do not hesitate to bring rain clouds and pour out from the heavens the shower of your grace. Those who know you in the spring and the summer find you most incomprehensible when you strip all the trees in winter and decorate their naked branches and twigs with glittering icicles.

You have a well-scheduled program of birth, growth, evolution, decay and termination. The time of each being's life is allotted with forethought and insight. To some of your prettiest beings you give at the most a day or sometimes only a few hours. You allow your restless human children to indulge in their exploits from sixty to one hundred years. To the more silent and contemplative ones, like the Sequoia, you do not hesitate to give several millennia.

O Mother, you do not wait for poets to sing in exultation or for chroniclers to record the growth and development of science. Instead you have a program of revelation beginning with sunrise to instruct your heliotropic children. And, in the gentle fondling of the moon sheen, there are other lessons for the geotropic ones. It is well known that you are the beautifier of the three worlds. You bring with you the wine of erotics concealed in your genitals. You surprise the world by issuing out of your secret chambers the sacred images of both *Śiva* and *Śakti*. Thus the input into erotics is drawn out as a joyous dawn of creation.

In your love games you play with your Lord with the sportive balls of your breasts. When the game is over you change the same breasts into brimming reservoirs of sweet milk and gain the approbation of the whole world as the Mother Supreme. When you kiss your Lord, it is as if you find his physical frame a wall between you and your beloved. You try to



15. इं अहंकाराकर्षिणी

penetrate into his very vital breath just by expiring your soul into his and in return to inspire yourself with your Lord's vital breath. When, through a unified synthesis of love, a new person comes from both of you, from the same lips come the first sounds of the vocabulary of your child, which will turn out to be a device for each person to conduct his or her life to the very end of the transactions to which they are summoned day after day. Thus, to us you are the perennial wine, the ever-flowing milk, and the sweet honey. Like the honey hidden away in the calyx of the flower, every word born of your speech has in it the honey of perennial wisdom.

The *soma* that is praised in the Vedic Brāhmaṇas, the ecstasy of artists, poets, musicians, which they find themselves unable to share with the scanty means of brush or word or voice — these are received in full measure directly from you as though you have given me a taste of your beauty-embellishing secret. Thus, in every passing moment my ego finds its identity with you. We have mutual attraction.

A river running into a desert land will sooner or later disappear in the thirsty sands. Even so, my Mother, I am traversing the desert land of infinite space and vanishing time. Like a dewdrop I will also evaporate and vanish in the blue sky. Thus when my ego identity no longer has any substantiating reality, may I disappear in your thoughts and be reborn again and again as your renewed dreams. From the day of my birth my mother was fondly swinging my cradle, singing lullabies. She was only a device for you to fill me with the luster of your love. If I am to rejoice in my ego, help me to give it the status of a true knower, a doer of the kindest actions, and an enjoyer fortunate to share my bounty with all.

॥ *im ahaṁkāraṁkarṣiṇī* ॥

Verse Sixteen

ām buddhyākarṣiṇī

O Mother, the inspiring deity of all muses. The poets and artists of high sensibility, when they are gently roused by the golden beams of the morning sun, are elated with the sight of all these beautiful mountains and the blue lagoons studded with white lilies. All facts of life become transformed into the suggestive concepts of beauty's highest landmarks.

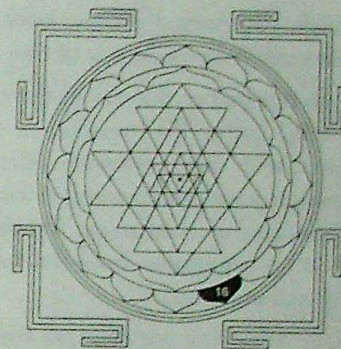
Their realization of factual beauty spontaneously suggests to them their own incomparable moral excellence.

As one born in the lotus pond, every morning I wake up with the resolve to sit at your feet and listen to your word of wisdom. You are so very eager that your precious words do not fall in the wilderness of an unintelligent mind. Each day you make me more receptive than before and sharpen my intelligence to go into the subtlest suggestions of the mystical purport of your precious words. The beautiful magenta with which the rising sun paints the eastern sky is a poetic suggestion that you are not a person here or there, but the composite blend of every joyous thought and inspiring word.

Millions are the lotuses in the lakes around the world. However numerous they are, each flower directly dedicates itself to you and you kiss each one separately. Such being your generosity, I never feel neglected or slighted. Every other person who is graced by your blessing becomes to me a brother or sister in the collective exultation we experience. In the night these trees and rocks, hills, and dales, lakes and water lilies were all indistinguishable dark masses. When the sun appears he stretches his golden fingers to smooth the petals of every flower, brighten the leaves of every tree. Even the blue-black rocks are painted in red and gold hues. It is by offering their feasts of beauty that they honor your presence. To be a participant in this feast is to share with you your boundless joy.

Countless are your faces with which you display to the world all the moods that poets speak of and musicians sing of with joy or pathos. The past, present and future transform in the eternal present. The spiritual space and time, which you assign to your children, does not ever generate any crowd. *R̥ṣis*, saviors, prophets, and all such blessed beings are allowed to put on a face that closely resembles your face. Like one burning lamp being mirrored in a million mirrors, the light that kindles the lamp of wisdom in every mind is your own.

Inspired by your incomparable beauty, *Brahmā* the Creator summons another of your aspects. That is how you become the mother of all muses. Both science and poetry find their eternal sources in you. You are putting the world into harmony with your gentle fingers playing on these strings of your *vīṇā*. When I sit in peace in the shrine of your eternal presence and play on the strings of my own *vīṇā*, you are so very compassionate that you replace me and my *vīṇā* with your eternal immanence in me.



16. ओं बुद्ध्याकर्षिणी

Although you have a million faces, when you fondle me, embrace me, and kiss me your essence is of one melody or another.

I do not gather flowers in the garden to offer you in a conventional way, but I gather the blossoms of musical notes from the strings of the *vīṇā* and, with deep reverence, offer them to you. The music that I arrive at through your compassionate inspiration is an ever purifying Ganges and I become an instrument to bring that flow to fill every heart. Thus, there is no separation between the singer, the song and the listeners. Purity alone abides.

Day after day we increase the blessedness of this world and look forward to the final consummation of love in the ultimate comprehension of one beauty that gives at once freedom and fulfillment. Even in those who come with only a spark of intelligence, you carefully shield that faint spark and blow it into a conflagration that will illuminate the entire world. However clumsy or filthy is a heart that is turned towards you, you purify it and make it a most worthy instrument with which to love. Those who have tasted your love will always know what love par excellence is. And the world will continue in the untiring pursuit of your beauty. Apart from beauty there is no other truth and the realization of that is merging oneself in the blazing light of love.

The hosts of the blessed ones gathered in your congregation are from every country, every age, every culture. To be part of this congregation itself is a blessedness of sharing. That way we live in the pure duration of your eternal being.

॥ āṁ buddhyākaraṣiṇī ॥

Verse Seventeen

ṭaṁ ṭhaṁ ḍaṁ ḍhaṁ ṇaṁ anaṅgamadanā
kulasundarī tvaritā

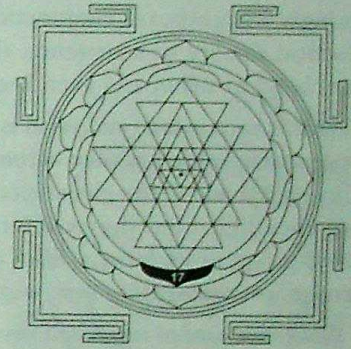
O Mother Sāvitṛī, beauty in its truest function does not pertain to any particular object or part of anything. Wherever your supreme bliss seems to manifest, even as a flicker, there one marvels at the vision of beauty. As your beauty cannot be discerned from the beautified, people call that beautiful. When true beauty is intuitively envisioned, all regrets of the

past and anxieties of the future vanish from us. In such a case the mind does not linearly move from perception to perception and conception to conception. Instead of such horizontalization affecting consciousness, the numinous core of consciousness verticalizes itself, marking the alpha with its polarization with the omega. In such a case, the contemplative and contemplation together become the manifestation of your beauty.

From among the intonated words the Sāvitrīs choose and string together words of musical harmony and punctuations of rhythmic delight. The listener is exposed to the magical bursting of meanings which remain hidden until the sky becomes vibrant with the special features of articulation. Even before it is being sung or recited, by your grace alone the musical excellence of word wisdom and poetic metaphor are commingled. Seeing this wonder flowing without effort from one's own articulating tongue or the pen that one handles, the aspirant becomes excited and gives himself or herself entirely to be used by the hidden source from where such treasures are coming forth to the delight of the poet and his several lovers.

It seems as if every poet is standing with folded hands at the sanctum of beauty, expecting the portals to be opened. This reverential waiting upon the supreme source of wisdom and beauty is called *tapas*. When the hour of envisioning comes, each one is filled with ecstasy and stung by the madness of beauty. Each becomes overpowered by the exaltation that ensues from one's inspiration and pours out words of exquisite beauty. In fact, this beautiful world is not created of mud and stones. It is so elaborately created with metaphors and similes and the ingenious suggestions that have come from millions of poets over the centuries of civilization's growth.

It is a wonder that what you gathered from the drum (*damarū*) of your husband was only a few consonants and a few vowels. You have given the bond of meaningful union to consonants with appropriate vowels so that they hold each other and go around and around, dancing the path of poetic significance. You have created not only languages but also collective admiration for sights as well as sounds. Himalayas, Merus and Kailāsas are perhaps never seen with eyes, but when they are heard of through the descriptions of the poet, the connoisseur's wisdom eye is opened to share the poet's vision. If you scrape away all the words you have given us, the world will disintegrate and fall into pieces. The



17. टं ठं डं ढं णं अनङ्गमदना कुलमुन्दरी त्वरिता

seemingly insignificant conjunctions and prepositions not only give syntactical finality to a sentence, they also hold lovers together in the eternal bond of union and even keep enemies in abeyance.

What is seen is little and what is heard is much. By meditating on you my perishable being has now become the imperishable *akṣara*. Like a tree and its cool shadow, the glowing sound and its self-elaborating meaning stand together. Like the proliferation of a tree's branches and the multiplication of its foliage, from a singular word arises the cluster of language, ever producing new words and new meanings.

Where we cannot reach and yet are sure that there is a sublime height from where your grace descends, that we call *parā*. Even though we do not have any eye beyond the eye that sees meaning, we decide that there are archetypes from which alone we get all typical designs. We call it *paśyantī*. If *parā* and *paśyantī* are our presumptions, the middle ground which you conceal so meticulously from us is the workshop of your word creation (*madhyamā*). You never share with anyone the secret of choosing the right word with the sweetest of intonations and intense energy which gives it an irrefutable wisdom dynamic. You can give a word the luster of absolute transparency so that on hearing it the listener's mind immediately comes to certitude. Such is your secret culturing of words.

Then you pass them on to our organs of speech. The speaker and the listener simultaneously come to the wonder of your secret creation. With these words you led us into the marketplace where, forgetting you, we get into noisy bargains. We follow your steps to the holiest of holy places and listen to hymns and praises and become filled with ecstasy. You lead us to the seat of wisdom where the finest elucidations of truth are given with logical excellence. We are also led to concerts and operas for our rejoicing. For the human device of an opera or a concert, several devices and a hundred people are needed to participate. But when you preside in the inner shrine of our musical throne, you are satisfied with the simple device of a human mouth and its tongue, larynx and windpipe. One person to sing and a million people to listen — all are transported to the highest realm of ecstasy if only you are pleased. Such is your loving care for us and the infinite devotion with which we relate ourselves to you. You are both the transcendent *Sāvitṛī* and the immanent *Vasīnī*.

॥ ṭaṁ ṭaṁ ḍaṁ ḍaṁ ṇaṁ anaṅgamadanā kulasundarī tvaritā ॥

Verse Eighteen

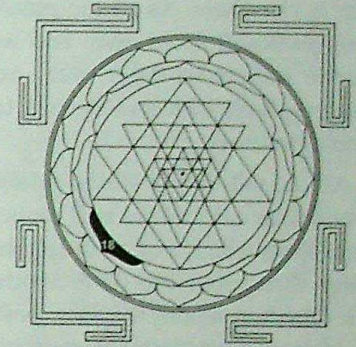
śaṁ śaṁ śaṁ haṁ anaṅgāṅkuṣā nīlapatākā nityā

O Mother Māheśvarī, as the symbol of Śaṅkara, you have listened to the percussive expression of the consonants. From his blue throat you received the sixteen vowels. By embellishing the consonants with the vowels, and stabilizing the vowels with the consonants, you are continuously creating a world which is expressive of your immaculate value in every item that phenomenally comes and goes and meaningfully adorns your hierarchy of values. With your two eyes you create the day and the night. For each shade of light and shadow that heightens the contrast or subdues the merger of light and shade, you create ever-new nuances of aesthetic sensibility.

Day and night come together at the dawn and the dusk. In the morning you allow the eastern skies to grow brighter and brighter in their magenta blush. Slowly from the grey and blue sky a brilliant pink and golden color ensues. The lotus ponds are roused to receive the morning sun with their unfurling petals. The red petals of the lotus are already brilliant in their hues but they become doubly so when gently fondled by the golden rays of the morning sun. You reverse the order of colors in the evening. The earth, sun and moon, the blue lagoons and their water lilies are all your creation. Being so intimate with you, these luminous bodies share with you the secret of your beauty, which is none other than your intense love for your Lord. You do not have anyone else to adore. Whatever overwhelms you in your hour of beatitude is the pure essence of your devotion, *ekarasa*.

Although celestial nymphs like Urvaśī are naturally endowed with superseding beauty, they cannot claim the purity of your essential beauty which has no outside or inside. For all those who receive their pain-pleasure stimuli through their sense-organs and those who are hankering after the images of beauty by dwelling on mental images, aesthetic enjoyment is a fleeting momentary distraction. For that very reason, the entire world is suffering without gaining a steady ground. They are further disturbed by the infatuating shafts of erotics which Cupid is ruthlessly shooting in every direction.

When a person is attracted by another, each sense-organ is competing with the other to enjoy the beauty of the person they have chosen as their



18. रां षं सं हं अनङ्गाङ्कुशा नीलपताका नित्या

love object. The eye wants to see more and more. The ear never tires of listening to the sweet little talks of the other. When the lover fondles the beloved he cannot keep his hand restful. It glides all over, as if the magical touch is elsewhere. As all the pleasures of lovemaking are entirely born of suggestive illusions, men and women become a wilderness for each other to ramble in. After every attempt to fulfill oneself with carnal pleasures, both men and women fall into deep disgust and frustrating meaninglessness.

All the tall talk of ethical fidelity and one-pointed loyalty is thrown to the winds each time a new erotic tide wells up in one's heart. Like the bumblebees which look so deeply engrossed in their infatuation with one flower, then leave it to fly to another with a new zest, men and women seek others in whom they see fresh avenues of interest. Animals in the act of intercourse are not conscious of their counterparts. They look elsewhere as if the true spouse is only an archetypal idea in their imagination. Similarly, the person held in a deep embrace is only a physical excuse with no spiritual substance. That is why most people come to a sense of guilt and absolute revulsion after consummating their love.

O Mother, you knew the secret of disturbing the tranquility of *śam*, Śāṅkara, and out of that to produce *ṣam*, Śaṅmukha and, again, to recover the peace with *saṁ* and *ham*, continuous contemplation of so 'ham. Anaṅga, the god of erotics, is for you only a momentary device (*anaṅga kuṣā*). To counter the distractions of Eros you have the sixteen vowels to line up as your retainers (*ṣoḍaśa nityā*). Each sound, when taken separately is powerless. But when consonants are tied to each other with the musical melody of vowels, they all become powerful. I am also powerless, just a name, but when I become established in you, I represent your tonality (*śruti*), your musical notes (*svara*) and the all-captivating melody (*rāga*). Bless me that I become eternally auspicious by knowing and possessing your secret treasure.

॥ śaṁ ṣaṁ saṁ haṁ anaṅgāṅkuṣā nīlapatākā nityā ॥

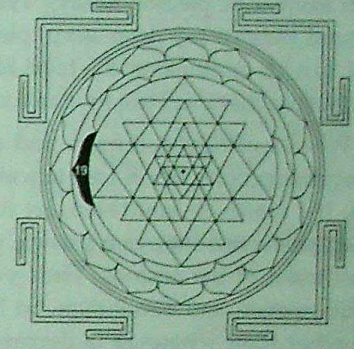
Verse Nineteen

**taṁ thaṁ daṁ dhaṁ naṁ anaṅgamaḍanaṭurā
sarvamaṅgalā vijayā**

O Mother, the ultimate discerner of the desirable, to precipitate creation and to proliferate your creatures you have invested libidinal dynamics in them. You send Manmatha, the churning of minds, to everyone. Sitting in the eyes and ears and in the ticklish organ of touch, this disturber of mind's tranquility generates an unappeased hunger and unquenchable thirst to get closer and closer to one's beloved. There is not one single sentient being who does not know the subtle games that are played in the field of erotics. Even a single glance or the wink of an eye can communicate volumes of desires and a tacit agreement to get into any game that one's partner suggests in silence.

In a simple wish, you are the controller of its unfoldment and operation. If you so wish, you can keep the seeds of desire sleeping in the granary of a person's *suṣupti* (causal consciousness). Once you have allowed the environmental facilities, the seed sprouts into its vertical growth and horizontal demands. Before coming to the actual world where experiences await a lover, he or she choreographs the whole love scene in the green room of dreams. If there is only one possibility in the actual world, there are thousand possibilities in the world of subjective imagination. Finally, when chances get into collusion with your assent and nature's connivance, the stage is set for the actual game which can hook one into a chain of *karma* that can recurrently happen a hundred times thereafter, sometimes even through many lives. When, in an ecstatic mood, blindfolded with love, one gives oneself into the embrace of another, nobody knows what is awaiting the lovers, a tragedy or comedy.

The Śivaliṅga is a perfect symbol of the immobile assuming a position to stir. Your all-moving libidinal fountain sits firm as an unmoved foundation. O Śiva and Śakti, what games of paradoxes you play to erase out of our minds even the last drop of reason. We have read in the legends that when the Supreme Lord, in his anger and shame, burned away the god of erotics and reduced him to ashes, you shed your tears of compassion for him and gave him permanent residence in the secret chamber of your own genital. If every woman is your replica, how can the world ever escape this fun-loving god who comes out hunting from every love-sick woman?



19. तं थं दं धं नं अनङ्गमदनातुरा सर्वमङ्गला विजया

In the very sound *hara* there is *ha*, the exclamatory sound, and *ra*, the letter symbol for rejoicement. The auspiciousness for which your Lord Śāṅkara is praised even changes his basic character when he is in communion with you. He expects the world to join his frenzied dance. Then alone is he pleased to say, "Hail, hail." If I am to be awakened from the seed state of my deep sleep, please send to love me not the limbless Eros, but his annihilator, the Lord himself. Allow me to have my identity with you so that I will not love anyone but him, the lord of auspiciousness.

When I offer you flowers and oblations, that can substitute for any love-game people play. If I am to walk blindfolded, let it be always towards you. If I am to be embraced, let it be your grace ever-enveloping me. When you created me as a particle you did not forget to include in it any constituent of the cosmos. Thus you and I are led by the same law of cyclic creation and dissolution. So I am sure that nothing can happen to me other than whatever is decreed for you and the entire universe. I know this is a difficult game to play, but the reward that ensues from it is the most covetable. If it is your desire that I should walk through the fire of scorching emotional flames, let it be, so that thereafter I can live, putting my trust in my self-confidence and my unshakeable faith in our trusteeship. Salutations to you, Vijayēśvarī.

॥ taṁ taṁ daṁ dhaṁ naṁ anaṅgamaḍanāturā sarvamaṅgalā vijayā ॥

Verse Twenty

śaṁ kṣaṁ anaṅgamālinī citrā jvālāmālinī

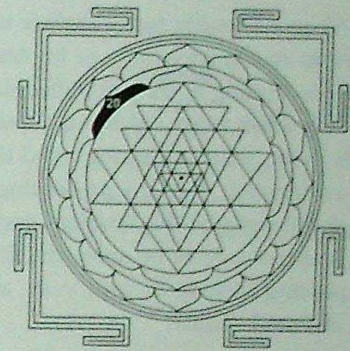
Mother, your basic *mantra* is *śaṁ* and your seed *mantra* is *kṣaṁ*. You are self-luminous by nature. The primeval Lord is in his eternal state of pure auspiciousness. In that state he is like an infinite stretch of waveless ocean, tranquil and placid. It is your sport to take a spark of your Lord's reality and create the living self by providing it with a body, mind and psychic animation.

You know how hazardous it is for a newly-born child to become familiar with the conditions of this world which is at once beautiful and ugly, pleasure-giving and painful. It is with alternating stress and joyous

fondling that you give each person the experiential abundance of the varieties of pain/pleasure situations which enable them to become ultimately desirous of liberation. You are always with them and, like a physician of goodwill, whenever they need a drastic treatment, you stand by as if you are stony-hearted. But when aspirants cannot withstand the acid test of the exercises you give any longer, you take them in your own compassionate hands and lull them to sleep. Your ultimate goal is to make everyone perfect, enjoying the supreme peace of your Lord.

That is why the basic *mantra śam* is always kept before you like a final cause to transform the *jīvas*. Your seed *mantra kṣam* suggests two of your opposite intentions. One is exposing the aspirant to the most difficult of tests. The letter *kṣa* is indicative of distress and hard labor. But when it terminates with the sound *m* it is suggestive of the final liberation (*mokṣa*). When you are so intimately interested in our personal life, it is only natural that we look for you, but you are not to be seen anywhere. You are like the string on which flowers are strung which is concealed by the flowers. In the same way, we see only our crying faces, smiling lips, or wonder-struck eyes. Your instrument is the bodiless Anāṅga. You are also like that. Keeping yourself hidden, you only show us the spectrum of love. Like a river, which washes and purifies all those who enter it, you also cleanse us, sometimes with our cheerful laughter and sometimes with our overflowing tears.

When artists create symbols, the critic has to interpret them. But in your creation the very pictures you present are themselves definitions and interpretations of the value we adore. We give names to forms to mark how distinctive each form is. We make endless studies of the specific peculiarities you have given to each item of your creation. Sometimes we put many silly questions. We ask why the dragonfly has transparent wings and a brilliantly colored tail. We sometimes wonder from where a bee gets such tremendous power to beat its wings so fast that they disappear from our vision. If you expect us to flee from a charging cobra, why did you make it so comely with a beautiful hood and elegant neck painted with the seven colors of the rainbow? It is obvious that your intention is not to meet the reasons that we have developed in our small brains. In spite of the hurried transactions and boring humdrum of life, you come to us like lightening and steal our hearts for a moment to two which make life so worthwhile.



20. शं क्षं अनङ्गमालिनी चित्रा ज्वालामालिनी

When a friendly face is before us, when a sweet voice beckons us to return to an old friendship or invites us to make a new one, when a fresh flower is smiling at us, just in the place where another drooped, withered and fell, when from a glorious sunset we come to watch the full moon in all its glory, when a passing wind tickles the tree and casts its shadow in our courtyard, you are presenting to us once again the ever-flowing delightful song of the limbless god of erotics, Anaṅgamālinī. Although the limbless cannot be seen, the flickering light of your effulgence and the passing melody of your voice are as vivid as the feelings we have in our devoted minds.

Traditional legends place before us many paradoxes such as Viṣṇu having his restful siesta on a serpent and going for aerial flights on the eagle Garuḍa. The eagle and the snake are supposed to be mortal enemies. The same paradox makes the burner of the three cities opposed to the beautifier of the three cities. There is more complementarity between the frenzied dance of Śiva and the unflickering sheen of your gentle dance (*lāsya*). Even when Eros manifested on your lips while you were intensely pouring out your ardent prayer, and the flame that leaped out of the Lord's third eye burned Eros to ashes, instead of scorching you, it lavished upon you the irresistible beauty of the Lord's love-infested mind. We are confused, not knowing how you transform a curse into a blessing and a tragedy into a peaceful rejoicing. O Śiva Śaṅkarī, by meditation on the enigma of your *mantra*, I come to the neutral zero of your wisdom in which all pairs of opposites are burned out.

॥ śaṁ kṣaṁ anaṅgamālinī citrā jvālāmālinī ॥

Verse Twenty-one

**kaṁ khaṁ gaṁ ghaṁ ṇaṁ anaṅgakusumā
kāmeśvarī mahātripurasundarī**

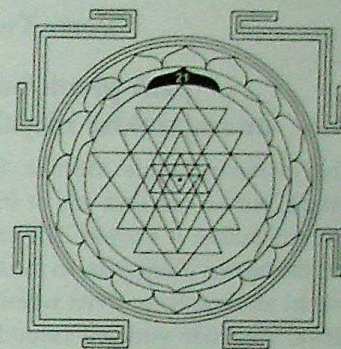
O Mother, the beautifier of the three cities, when the space of consciousness (*cidākāśa*) is unlit, abruptly you fill that space with your own brilliance and, thereafter, you continuously flicker there like a series of lightening flashes. In that effulgence of yours I see the altering brilliance of the sun, the moon and the fire. When the gleam of the

sunlight enters into the portals of my consciousness, the universal cognizer wakes up in me. At that time, fraternal love manifests in me and every sentient being appears to me as my kith and kin. I draw my strength from you to serve them all with love and compassion. You are well known as the over-soul that is protective of every desire born of integral value.

With the base *mantra karī* and the seed *mantra kham* you bless my internal space of consciousness. I see in each flower, despite its distinctive name, color, fragrance and taste of honey, your value-infusing beauty and recognize that as the *Anāṅgakusumā* with which you identify yourself. What occurs outside triggers within me the unitive vision of your pure beauty. When the sheen of the moon comes to my inner space, my self-luminous creative consciousness (*taijasa abhimānī*) wakes up. Without depending on any external light, I become efficient to create my inner garden, filling it with representative symbols of every positive value that is adored in you. When that happens, I leave the throat center where I was engaged in pouring out hymns and praises, and enter into the *ājñā* between my eyebrows where I go into a deep contemplative silence. Such a meditation makes me also all-pervading.

I do not know where your three cities are. I suppose they are the past, the present and the future; the heavens, the atmospheric world and the *terra firma*. Or are they the wakeful, the dream and the deep sleep? Before I discern and decide what psycho-physical entities are to be recognized as your cities, you lift me to the thousand-petalled lotus. Like a bumble bee which enjoys the honey secretly kept beneath those petals, I go into an ecstatic bliss and understand myself as having no identity apart from the confluence of your beauty, love and caring compassion. In such a state there cannot be any individual desire because I am a participant in my own final fulfillment. My prostrations to Tripurasundarī.

॥ karī kham gaṁ ghaṁ ṇaṁ anāṅgakusumā
kāmeśvarī mahātripurasundarī ॥



21. कं खं गं घं ङं अनङ्गकुसुमा
कामेश्वरी महात्रिपुरसुन्दरी

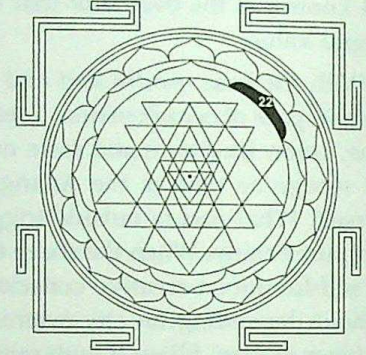
Verse Twenty-two

paṁ phaṁ baṁ bhaṁ maṁ
anaṅgarekhā nityaklinnā bhagamālīnī

O most compassionate Mother, from the sun, beams radiate in all directions, but no one sees any of those rays until sunlight illuminates an object and makes it visible. The radiant sun is only inferred from the objects the beams illuminate. In the same way, from you radiate the beams of love in all directions. Even when it is they that beautiful the objects of our love, you hide yourself behind the beautiful and sometimes we do not even suspect your presence there. It is perfect that you do not expect us to thank you for the many benefits you bestow on us. We read in the Upaniṣads that the blessed one who is touched by the Absolute becomes a knower of the Absolute and the Absolute itself. Almost as a counterpart to this, the person in bipolarity with a desired object becomes a consummation of his or her desire.

A piece of iron magnetized because of its contact with a magnet attracts iron pieces to itself in turn. Those who are blessed with your loving compassion also become irresistible sources of love. From them also flows compassionate care in all directions. Those who love God with all their strength cannot resist the love that flows from them to their neighbor and to that neighbor's neighbor. Just as God loves all, a lover of God also loves, because he or she has no other eye than the all-seeing eye of God, no other mind than the omniscient mind, no other presence than the omnipresent. Nityaklinnā is the ever-caring.

One has to burn, melt and be purified by the fire of eternal sacrifice. You are the sacrificial fire in which we are to be offered as sacred oblation. When the dross in us is burned, our essence will become one with your fragrance and fill the atmosphere with a benevolence that will be shared with all. You don't sit around like a temple deity in stone or metal, waiting for devotees to go through the ritual of propitiation and the singing of liturgies. O Mother Bhavānī, even before we address you, "Bhavānī," you understand all our needs, not only of the present but also for the mending of our past and replenishing us for the future. You enter in us and take over our program for several lives. Such bipolar love has no parallel in spiritual history.



22. पं फं बं भं मं अनङ्गरेखा नित्यक्लिन्ना भगमालिनी

Your base *mantra* is *pari*, indicating that you are Parāśakti, and your seed *mantra* is *bari* which indicates that you are the Baladāyini, the bestower of rewards. As Parāśakti all the sources of energy converge into you. And as Bhavānī you are the ever-radiating source of perennial auspiciousness. It was so kind of you to choose me to be a recipient of your special grace. You do not impose upon me any need to make decisions about the benevolences you want to bestow upon me. You always know what is good for me. Each day, each hour, each moment, you surprise me by guiding me from one garden of blessedness to another. It is so great that you make every blessedness a different experience. It is like gazing at a revolving diamond that is illuminated from all sides.

A woman is again and again exposed to pain for the simple reason that in the world of erotics she is the greatest attraction. Each admiration bestowed upon her is like an arrow shot at the nimble body of a beautiful deer. So it is no wonder that you are right there to provide her with new energy, new strength, and an ever-pure disposition. Thus, the special attention you give as Bhagamālīnī is like the raising of the Phoenix from its own burned ashes. The term Bhagamālīnī is suggestive of both the distress and the miraculous rescue that you give in the nick of time. We do not understand why, at the eleventh hour, you seem to cause such tragedies with which we cannot reconcile. It is as if you want to wash away every stain of the past so that one may emerge with the purity of a water lily.

Of all desires the greatest desire is to transcend desires. We can never attain this peak of fulfillment unless you give us total identity with you. That is why, when we are about to pray to you to show your compassion to us, we see ourselves transformed into you. Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Indra have to wait to worship you with the fire of oblation, but you have not set any special time for me. Which mother would stop her child from freely walking into her chamber, sitting on her lap, and seeking her breast to suckle? Such is the freedom you have given me. Your heart melts for me. When mothers kiss their children's foreheads, the warmth of that remains only for a second. But your kiss lives in my soul as an inerasable golden impression that I will carry with me from life to life. There is no blessing which is greater than the freedom with which you have blessed me. O liberating Mother, my prostrations at your feet.

॥ *pari pari bari bham mari anagarekhā nityaklinnā bhagamālīnī* ॥

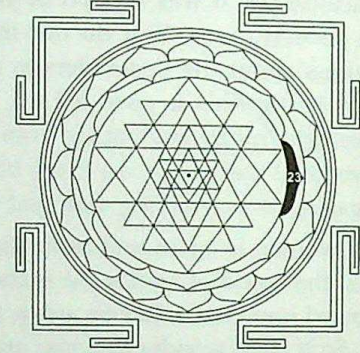
Verse Twenty-three

cam̐ chaṁ jaṁ jhaṁ ñaṁ
anaṅgamekhalā vahnivāsinī bheruṇḍī

O Mother, the rejoicer in the burning sport of your Lord. He smears his body with the sacred ash which is symbolic of the three *guṇas* (modalities), which represent the three phases of your creative secret. With *sattva* you give every form an adorable design and also qualities such as color, taste, and morphological detail that assure their existential validity. With *rajas* you create a functional dynamic that can give unique and individualistic behavior patterns. To some extent, it makes each created being indispensable or inevitable to occupy their assigned placement in the world order. Even the inconsistency of each item which is exhibited or covertly muffled has a significant role to play to make a person or thing negatively or positively valuable. *Tamas* is your powerful weapon of fusion and magnetizing to preserve the registered functional phase which saves a mode even to pass through the drastic dissolution to return as an inevitable item of fresh creation.

Thus behind the ashes smeared on the body of the Lord of Destruction you are hiding like a burning coal. The ashes only conceal the fiery cinder. The cyclic burning of the Lord is an inevitable constant. You are such an expert to foresee the death that gapes its mouth for each created being. Like daily sleep, death comes after a given span of life. Death and the total immersion of the universe at the time of the cyclic dissolution are all presided over by the Lord. Like a magical wizard you revive consciousness from the unconscious, life after death, and the universe after its destruction. Thus your creation is a short-time game which can be agreeably passed on for destruction. You do not hesitate to help your spouse in his destruction.

Considering all the creatures that crawl, walk and run around, swim in deep water and fly in the sky, and considering the variation that can be seen in the perfection of all from a virus to a philosopher, we can presume that you have some scheme in serializing your creatures. Each one is at some level of perfection. Maybe what has just begun will come out more perfect in the third or fourth cycle of your recreation. You give limbs from the most simple order of protozoa to the most complicated



23. चं छं जं झं ञं अनङ्गमेखला वह्निवासिनी भेरुण्डी

one of a human being — all to be reduced to another period of the limbless state. Even when you fix and elaborate interior coordinations in a living body, within twenty-four hours you suspend most of the limbs from their overt activity. At that time, the few operating limbs are taken over to your special care and they seem to be operated automatically. So it is rightly presumed that you are a manipulator of the limbless state, Anaṅgamekhalā.

The life with which you support us is like a burning candle. Every living moment is also a dying moment — we are burning out and you are the burning fire in each one of us. No wonder you are called Vahnivāsinī. Like the sacrificial fire which remains cold and undetectable in the firewood, first making its appearance as a spark when two dry pieces of wood are rubbed together, you come out of the physical inert bodies of lovers when they are aroused. From the spark of love a conflagration of established family life arises, with a million demands and countless responsibilities. Like the seven tongues of fire which rejoice in licking away the substance of the world, you stimulate our tongues which hunger for rejoicement. Like a mother bird feeding her fledglings, through your burning flames we creatures find your world a source of enjoyment (*bhoga*).

When you are described as the left half of the Lord that is only a metaphor used by poets for a semantic structuring of your symbolic position. In reality you are not restricted to the left or the right. An iron ball cast in the fire does not just turn red in one part and remain cold in the next. Even more than that, you occupy the whole of Śiva, perfectly knowing that you have to alter the steps of your dance when the time comes for leaving your position for Śiva to have his frenzied cosmic dance. As the Creatress, you rejoice in the redness of *rajas*. We do not know if the world outside has any color at all, but you have taken care to create us as color-loving being who color everything with the moods of our minds.

Just like among tastes we relish sweetness, in colors we have a special liking for magenta which is said to be your own favorite color. When the sun is about to rise or set, you not only transform the sun into that color, but you fill the sky, the clouds, the hills and dales, and snowy peaks of mountains, everything, with that color. You are like an artist who rejoices in his technique of wash painting. Again and again you blend the colors, either with red or you immerse all in the obliterating dark. Thus, you can

be Aruṇā, the red one, at your will, and Kālī, the black one, when that is your preference.

When Śiva became Bhairava, the dancing god who destroys, you became Bheruṇḍī, the one who feeds the fire of cosmic dissolution. It is not even necessary for him to open his third eye to turn everything into ashes because you are also vested with his third eye, with which you can pass on the ashes to him. When you alter your position from the limbless state, Anaṅgamekhalā, to that of the burning fire, Vahnivāsini, even the crescent which adorns your crown looks like a sickle with which you harvest all ripe creatures to throw into the fire of death.

A child fondles its toy doll, carries it around, nurses it and puts it to sleep just like a mother does. But when the child is hungry it forgets the toy and runs to its mother. Youngsters, aroused by erotic passions, seek their mates and spend hours rejoicing in sweet pleasures. Then they come to disillusionment and, with the arrival of maturity, turn away from the romance of love to more serious considerations of truth. All the love that they lived turns into an occasional sad memory, something to be regretted or something to be laughed at. In old age, when the senses are decommissioned and the mind is no longer concerned with the social security of life, the only adorable reality the old person seeks is the bliss of Śiva, Śivānanda or Śiva Sāyujya, total merger in the boundless.

This being the case, you are to be adored in the childhood and youth of life and even more adored in old age and at the approach of death. This is the lesson you teach us in the span of each life. After a pause, you revive us with better wisdom and the essence of the maturity we have gained in the previous life. My adorations.

॥ caṁ chaṁ jaṁ jhaṁ ṇaṁ anaṅgamekhalā vahnivāsini bheruṇḍī ॥

Verse Twenty-four

yaṁ raṁ laṁ vaṁ anaṅgaveginī śivadūtī mahāvidyeśvarī

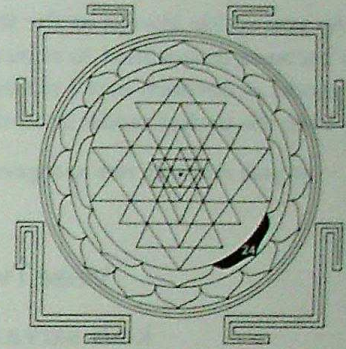
O Mother, the Goddess of supreme wisdom. If somebody asks who you are, the answer to be given is that you are the one who makes us rejoice. Further we can say you are the one who enables us to merge with the Supreme. When we are in our wakeful state, with sweet and invigorating

words you please our minds and entertain us with the physical charm of the world you are creating. Thus you are our Ramyā, one who pleases us. When we are asleep you withdraw the world of names and forms from us. In its place you bring our peaceful merger in sleep. Thus you are our dissolver.

All these are cryptically stated in the *mantra yam ram lam van*. The *yam* and *ram* stand for the curiosity aroused in us to know and the true satisfaction brought to us with the revelation of the true secret of each manifestation. The *lam* indicates how in our rejoicing we become one with the all-embracing bliss. The *van* indicates the great wonder that leaves our minds always identified with you. Whether we are wakeful or asleep, to keep this body alive you become the subtle energy of the over soul that is ruling our vital forces. In that sense you are Anaṅgaveginī. Under your direction, creation, sustenance and dissolution are carried on by Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara. Although this triad is entrusted with the changing aspect of the world, it all happens within the eternally auspicious Sadāśiva.

However different are the inspiring and expiring of breath, they are both maintaining life. Even though sleep and wakefulness contradict each other, for the maintenance of life such distinctions are necessary. Thus the seemingly contradictory opposites that are seen in our life are happening by your decree. Even when Sadāśiva is intently looking on and, by his very presence everything is maintained auspicious, you do not disappear because you are Sadāpūrvā. You have no beginning and you have no end. It is that eternal aspect that is added to Śiva's name as the prefix *sadā*.

The Lord is the source of all sciences. Extracting them from him one by one, you instruct and illuminate the living beings. That is why you are called Mahāvidyeśvarī. You are also the archetypal model of devotion and faith. For that reason you are called Śivadūti. You do not have a single interest which is not an overt recognition of the subtle interests of your Lord. If an individual's mind is possessed by a sense of distress, confusion or fear, you enter such a person's life as consolation, clarity and fearlessness because you are Śaṅkarī, who is ever engaged in mending and replenishing anyone who feels tired and feeble. Night is followed by day and the storm is followed by peace. Thus if you seem to be absent for a little while, that confusion is immediately rectified with the delight and exhilaration of your reappearance.



24. यं रं लं वं अनङ्गवेगिनी शिवदूती महाविद्येश्वरी

As you reside always as the true Self of everyone, there is no one who becomes disqualified to rejoice in the Self. Looking upon you as a true model of devotion may I represent you to everyone around and also may I see the perfect model in all those with whom I relate myself.

॥ yaṁ raṁ laṁ vaṁ anaṅgaveginī śivadūti mahāvidyeśvarī ॥

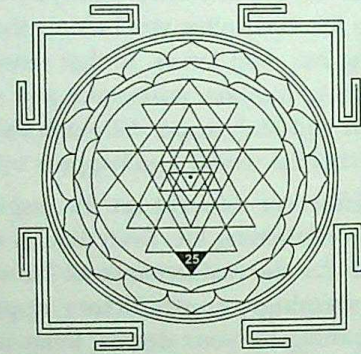
Verse Twenty-five

kaṁ sarvasaṁkṣobhiṇī

O Mother, you are seated on the throne of Śivānanda which is ornamented with the diamonds of eternal truth. You are not seen as a person but as a million radiances. The glory of Śiva is countless millions of precious stones. From each one of them innumerable beams of immeasurable effulgence radiate in all directions. In that conglomeration of colorful beams your pure form is enveloped and cannot be discerned. In the dissolution and the re-emergence of the universe, and through the cosmic ages called *manvantara*, you are always presiding both as the Creatress and the Dissolver.

You always desire to make your manifestation exquisitely beautiful in every detail. Whatever comes into being inevitably changes and you bless the changing phases with new dimensions of beauty. Even the disintegration and termination are made as beautiful as the origin of creation. In creations such as painting or sculpting, dancing or acting, there is continuous orderly change with gradations. It is your device that even changes have changeless laws of assigned patterns. The secret of artists is to know from inside the natural and spontaneous formats that come in a sequential order according to your suggestion. Even the untrained ear of a layman can recognize a dissonance because all are made of the same music that you have sung into creation.

Your triple qualities can lead certain undisciplined creatures to go into tangents. For those who know the value and virtue of each, they can be the most helpful avenues for walking in our path. For the purpose of keeping the world order in the right rhythms you have assigned Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara their respective duties. As they are always serving you at your lotus feet with great reverence, all their functions are observed



25. कं सर्वसंक्षोभिणी

in detail with your glance. Even a little displeasure emitted through your glance can cause these gods great distress. We read in the Upaniṣads that the maintenance of the world order is carried out by the heavenly agents in fear of the Absolute.

By simply watching the sprouting of a bud and its growth, one can see how much care is given to keep each stage of the bud a rare model of perfection. The unfolding of the petals and the state of the fully bloomed flower stand as a good example of how you do not hold any secret longer than required. It is to give perfect joy to your children that each item is brought to its fruition. The final consummation is like a finale in music. Thus the function of *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas* has in it the beauty of a song sung or a dance performed.

From my birth to this day, when I retrospect and look at my life, I see myself as a farmland, prepared by your having cleared the jungle, re-arranged the stones, broken clods and planted various kinds of crops, flowering bushes and fruit trees. Now I am like a rich orchard. I think of myself as a world visited by the sun every day and by the waxing and waning moon night after night. The sun and moon are the two eyes with which you have been bringing me alternately to the transactions of life and dreams of life's poetry. Like the rain clouds going from garden to garden, your grace has been following me to nourish my hopes and bring each one to its ultimate fulfillment.

As Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara are not apart from your own existential reality, subsistential growth and moment to moment enjoyment, the grace you have showered upon me is also the grace I have been sharing with them. All the hymns and prayers that I offered to you were in praise of them also. These gods who have been serving you with devotion were bestowing upon me their kindest care because I am as much a darling to them as I am to you. Thus between the Absolute divinity and the relative measures of divine love, I am most benefitted. I offer you myself as one of the best flowers blooming in your garden. Please accept me and my eternal devotion to you.

॥ *kaṁ sarvasaṁkṣobhiṇī* ॥

Verse Twenty-six

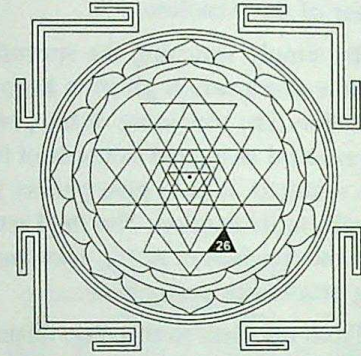
kham sarvavidrāvīṇī

O Mother, what happened to the amazing tree that had its branches spread out in all directions, overladen with beautiful fragrant flowers? Was it the same that withered, fell in the great rain, turned into earth and disappeared? What happened to its leaves and flowers? Have they all evaporated and disappeared in the atmosphere? Did the time of fire change the tree into mere smoke and ashes? The green energy that was the delight of its leaves, has it gone into the clouds to become occasional lightning?

The monads of the five elements were quintuplicated at the dawn of creation. Now in the dusk I suspect they have given up their comradery and each has gone into its aloneness. It was in your scheme of things to alter the seasons so that the vegetative world could play hide and seek with us. You also gave us the sport of make-believe death coming to us night after night as sleep, followed by our hilarious laughter in the morning. It seems you have now closed down such kinds of amusements. There is not a single throb to be seen anywhere. In the intensity of your presence one may sometimes experience total absence. Is that the lesson you are giving us now?

Every mountain and its snowy peaks and the deep oceans were all like your eternal treasuries. Now there is not a single blade of grass to be seen. Sand and sand and sand. My eyelids are also feeling heavy. Is the enveloping desert slowly entering into us also? In the vast stretch of your infinite nothingness, only your Lord is seen, totally lost in his frenzied dance. I am sure that all these flying particles of dust were once cheerful, laughing souls, holding whose hands I was once dancing in the garden of your bounty. Even when everything is lost, I'll be sticking on to your lotus feet as a tiny little dust particle.

Brahmā the creator is not to be seen in his lotus seat. How can there be creation when there is no creator? Now your Lord is not burning anything. He is withholding all schemes of transformation. Viṣṇu is no longer in his dream state. He must have gone into *suṣupti*, the dreamless state. If he does not remember, no one will remember to act. It is a contradiction in terms to say that death has died. This is that rare occasion when even nothingness has become unreal. The scale of values has become



26. खं सर्वविद्राविणी

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discarded from use. There is no one to remember even all the Manus and Manvantaras that have gone before.

In such a total dissolution of the source of being and non-being, your dear husband alone is seen as a rejoicer. Maybe your intense love for him has become his armor of protection against this all-devastating time in which time has also become ultimately non-throbbing. I am incapable of offering anything to you, so may I immerse deeper and deeper into your silence.

॥ kham sarvavidrāviṇī ॥

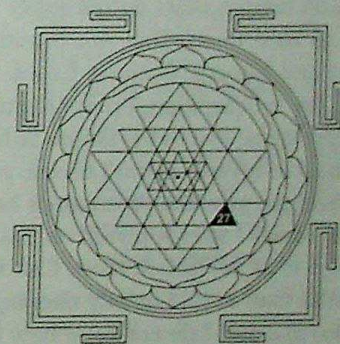
Verse Twenty-seven

gam sarvākarsṇī

O Mother, the all-embracing unifier of love, the cock crows in the morning. When the fragrant breeze fondles the branches of trees, leaves make a rustling sound. The streamlet is flowing with a subdued gurgling song. The little baby fed by its mother's breast milk is satisfied and laughs merrily. From the sanctum of various temples of worship comes the jingling of bells along with liturgies sung in praise. I suppose these are all items of worship offered to you, using the very gifts that you have given to each one. You have also given me a voice which may not be very melodious. In the way it occurs to me, I clap my hands and beat the rhythms.

How many languages are spoken by people? No one can say which language is the most superior and dear to you. Within the same language there are many tongues speaking with various accents. Even when a child lisps, its mother can interpret it, correctly. So I am not afraid to sing my songs and offer my prayers. However incorrect are my pronunciations and the words I choose, I am sure you will think of each one as an appropriate *mantra*.

Each sect of the various religions of the world has a different way of propitiating you with rituals, offerings, sacrifices and many gestures made with heads and hands. Which is the correct mode of worship? I don't think that you have any preference. In Christian chapels or cathedrals, the priests conduct the Eucharist Mass and those who participate believe they are partaking of the flesh and blood of Jesus and their sins are



27. गं सर्वाकर्षिणी

pardoned. The Muslims sit and stand, bow down and look up with great devotion, offering their prayers to Allah by reciting appropriate Arabic lines from the Koran. Is that the right way or is it the only right way?

Sometimes I am bewildered, seeing these elaborate rituals and the confidence with which people speak of God and describe hell and heaven as if they are constant visitors there. You don't mind that I have simplified my belief by seeing you in everything, and all as an inseparable presence of your beautiful manifestation. So I am circumambulating everything. Even if I am not doing it, the earth is ritualistically carrying all of us in her spaceship and we go round and round the sun, sometimes singing "Hallelujah" and sometimes chanting "Hara Hara Mahādeva." I suppose both of these mean "Lā illāh illallāh" or "Ave Maria."

How ingenious are the people who have conceived and created you to adorn their altars with ceramic or metal images. These beautiful little gods on temple altars do not suffer from hunger or thirst and there is no way to feed them. That is a beautiful idea — to think of God without thirst and hunger. Even so, I cook sweetmeats with great devotion and care. For a little while I place them all before you. Then, imagining that you are more real in the flames of hunger burning in my stomach, I offer them all to myself. When I rejoice, you must also be rejoicing. My teachers advised me to make prostrations before you. I forget to do so. But when night comes I stretch myself on this all-supporting earth. I know you will accept it as my prostration. Can there be a worship more honest and trustful than a child quietly sleeping in the lap of its mother? My worship is also like that. I do not know how to surrender. Are you not surrendering everything to keep us children happy and cheerful?

Do you think that I am chaotic? Is chaos not a field for you to arrange everything and put it into perfect order? I know how busy you are with me, bringing order to my chaos, beauty to my ugliness, and love to my irritations. That is my submission; that is my surrender. After all, it is for your playful sport that you have created me. Unlike sporting equipment such as bats, balls and wickets, we are playthings which are entirely conscious of the sport in which you engage us. You have given this insight to me to be playful and hilarious, to bump around like a rubber ball, or to sit like a pawn on a chessboard, moving only with caution.

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In all games, you are the umpire. When you blow the whistle, we start. When you dictate penalties, we submit ourselves to them. O Mother, how beautiful is your arrangement — the lion roars, the dog barks, the donkey brays, the cat mews, the rat squeaks, the bird chirps. What do you expect me to do? I babble and you laugh. Such is the glory of our game.

॥ gaṁ sarvākārṣiṇī ॥

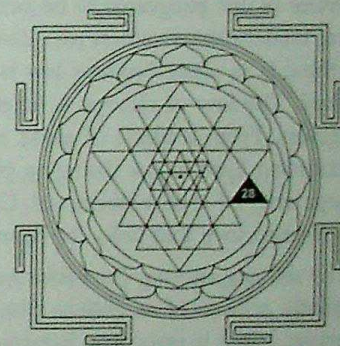
Verse Twenty-eight

ghaṁ sarvāhlādinī

O Mother, the rejoicer in everyone. Your creation of this world, its sustenance, and destruction are all mysterious events that can evoke the highest wonder in everyone. Who can say where the sun rises? Some say it is from behind the yonder hill, and others think it is rising from the ocean. All see the wonder of the sun peeping out from the horizon in the morning and slowly traversing toward the west. Looking at the crimson sun some people rejoice and say, "Look at the rising sun." Looking at the same sun, another one remarks, "Look, the sun is setting." Many do not know what the sun is, and yet it brings a sense of wonder and inexpressible joy.

When the sun or moon comes there is not only the sunrise and moonrise. There are also the appearances of hills and dales, mountains and cities. In twenty-four hours, everything has an emergence into the visible and a disappearance into the invisible. The changing light also brings corresponding changing shadows. Visible beauty is never the same even for two minutes. A flower does not do anything; it just remains there. When it is illuminated it is like a special manifestation of color and light. The unflickering flame of a lamp has the same status of eventless shining. These are not the special privileges of the flowers and brightly burning lamps. By itself and in itself a grain of sand, a pebble, a rock, a bug — each has an intrinsic nature of its own and consequently a value of its own. A violet is glorified because it is a humble flower; a rose is glorified because it has a color and fragrance that are universally appreciated.

When a pot is to be made, it is inevitable that one should have mud. If what one cares for is jewelry, gold or silver are sought and they are valuable.



28. चं सर्वाह्लादिनी

The gentlest of breezes has a lyrical quality. A typhoon is devastating; it can also be a metaphor for a tragedy. Thus everything not only has a *soadharna*, intrinsic nature, but that nature also has a reputation, *dharmakīrti*. When that worth is explicitly brought forth, that brings fulfillment.

Where the dawn and dusk were celebrated some hours ago, everything is now veiled by the thick darkness of night. Where there is no illumination (*prakāśa*), there is also no critical description (*vimarśa*). Where action terminates, there is liberation. This is your eternal *līlā* to play with the alternating balls of day and night. With the same ease you create a universe or withdraw it into your dissolution. In the morning when we wake up the eastern sky is still there. The sun rises as usual, the cock crows, and we remember the sequences of our programs to be performed. Even so, after an oblivion of several millenniums, when manifestation comes into being once again, everything is as usual. No new law is to be initiated, no new design is to be invented. The law of change is as eternal and binding as the law of the changeless. From a blade of grass to the creator, Brahmā, and from the transforming light to the changing phenomena, everything is subjected to the negativity of total withdrawal. Continuity of being is assured through the unbroken love that links the hearts of the Mother and her Lord.

The shining earring (*kaṇṭābharaṇa*) has in it the secret of eternity. It is differently spoken of as *anāhata* (the unbroken) or *aditi*, also meaning the unbroken. What is unbroken between Śiva and Śakti is the total trust and the never-failing care of absolute love. The waxing and waning of interests in us take away the continuity of our eternal being. You are teaching us again and again to keep the spirit of attention unbroken, like a continuous streak of oil. In other words, you are asking us never to wake up again to the vicissitudes of change and never to sleep again from the ever-shining glory of truth. Profound salutations to you.

॥ ghaṁ sarvāhlādinī ॥

Verse Twenty-nine

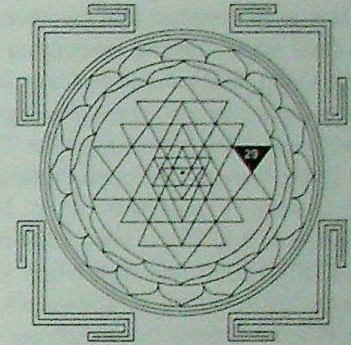
ṇaṁ sarvasammohinī

O Mother of all muses and the source of creative enthusiasm! Through several cycles you have been preserving the innumerable modes of beauty

which constitute the universe in its entirety. Each passing moment has a temporal significance of immense value. Time as a whole, as pure duration, has in it the unbroken unity of all the cycles of creation hitherto come and gone and the cycles yet to be. Both the space you have allotted to embodied beings and the space between bodies have been the source of inspiration for artists and architects and even for ordinary folks who have to personally structure the model of their own world to understand the magnificence of your creation. The structural elegance and significance of everybody that you put together, from a virus to a galaxy, astonishes all creators. The engineering skill of foreseeing a function even before a structure is designed and assembled is another source of great education to us.

All these can be seen epitomized in the value-studded crown of Viṣṇu, in whom we see enshrined the secret of all *dharma*s. Like his spouse, Śrī or Lakṣmī, his crown is of innumerable auspicious qualities. Seated in the lotus flower blooming from the navel of Viṣṇu, Brahmā, the creator of the universe, is ever-contemplating on every shade of beauty seen in Viṣṇu's crown, including the subtle nuances they suggest. That is why in nature's creation you do not see even the slightest flaw. With ever-elaborating creation, Brahmā is entertaining the shining ones (*devas*). Indra, the Lord of the *devas*, gathers the appreciation of the creative excellence of Brahmā and passes it on to the creative minds of the connoisseurs of beauty. They, in turn, fill every heart with promptings to appreciate the manifestation of *ānanda* in music, painting, sculpting, poetry, architecture, theatrical arts and in the very fascinating relationship of lovers, not to say the contemplative depths to which mystics go.

In this world of bountiful values, you are seated on your throne, expecting that great moment when you have to gather all this and pass it on to the Lord to be crushed in the palms of his hands and reduced to the ashes with which he smears his forehead and body. You do it like an offering. Even though you individually care for the perfection in the arrangement of the petals of a humble flower like the jasmine, it is with no regrets that you make an offering of all the seven worlds to your Lord. Your happiness is identical with the happiness of the Absolute. What you care for is not pleasure or pain, but the supreme unity of happiness in which every shade of pain and pleasure becomes equally harmonized and blended.



29. ॐ सर्वसम्पत्तिनी

It is in this context that the attendants of Mother whisper to her that in this final act of turning everything to nothingness, she should somehow retain Viṣṇu, Brahmā and Indra as latent potentials, to be incentives for the next cycle of creation. The cosmological dissolution and the deep sleep into which we go are qualitatively alike. The streaming thoughts of consciousness and being busy with the promptings of action are all hushed into silence when memory goes into sleep. In deep sleep only the unperturbed consciousness of Viṣṇu retains the many cycles of the future. Again in the dawn of creation and also when we wake up, Viṣṇu moves from deep sleep to his dreaming consciousness. It is from the mine of Viṣṇu's dreams that Brahmā gathers the archetypes of all modes and spreads out this vast world of names and forms and functions of all kinds. He spreads everything around just as before, only to be concealed again when the memory is hushed, and in our case, when deep sleep takes over.

The micro-function and the macro-function of the individual and the universe are identical. So, if *citta*, the repository of memory, is inoperative, no word will burst into meaning, even if it is shouted in one's loudest voice. When memory is lost, time will not occur to mind because there is no beginning, no end and no movement from beginning to end. The beginning should always be marked by a surprise, asking, "what is this?" The elaboration of the world comes through the description of "what". The question "what is this?" alerts Indra who stands in the center of consciousness with his chariot to which the five senses are yoked as horses ready to gallop in the infinite range of space in the path of time. The path in which Indra's horses pace is what we understand as thought (*vicāra*) and each stride the horses of consciousness make is the modulation of a sentence.

Thus with the fine threads of time, space and all, O Mother, you weave a tapestry that conceals all these dramatic performances that enrich the art of creation. From behind that veil, you smile and it bewitches your Lord; we are filled with gratitude. We offer you our worship.

॥ *nāṁ sarvasammohinī* ॥

Verse Thirty

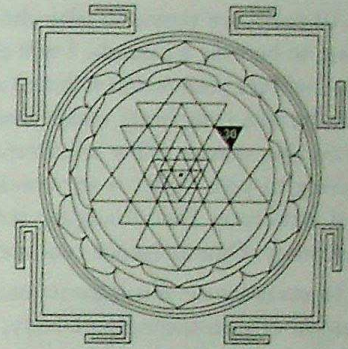
caṁ sarvastambhinī

AUM kṛm̐. O Mother, the secret implied in the *mantra kṛm̐* is not to be understood through any exercise of ratiocination. It is to be understood

by the mutual infusion of the body and the Self. When a small particle of carbon becomes filled with fire it becomes a spark. In the shining body of a spark, no one can discern which is its animating fire and which is its inanimate carbon. In the same manner, when a person is in a state of absolute bipolarity, it is difficult to discern who is the devotee and who is the Lord. Sunlight belongs entirely to the sun. Even so is the relationship of the moon and its sheen.

When I believe I am the body, with that very thought I identify myself with helplessness, weakness, disease and mortality. When the same consciousness comes to recognize itself as the all-pervading Self, all frontiers disappear. Time and space no longer offer limiting conditions. The mind becomes clear and devoid of all shades of doubt. The Self is nearby; it is far. It pertains to the concrete and it is more subtle than the subtle. These and many other adjectives are no longer necessary to know the Self because I am That. No flaw raises its ugly head of controversy. There is no distinction between what is and how it is. There is no attempt necessary to meditate on the quality of happiness because, in the reality of the equipoise or the beatitude that is established, *ānanda*, the indescribable, pervades throughout. Seeing one in that state, a knower of such mystical identity, you declare it as an instance of *sānanda samādhi*.

In the same manner, when I am drawn to your feet and, in my infinite delight, when I ponder on the blessedness of the earth in which you tread, I see how you transform all feet into yours and walk in every path as if all paths are yours. If my feet are yours, then what is left behind which is not yours? It is amusing to me to watch how you trot around as a horse, crawl around as a snake, and climb a wall or a tree as ivy. Perhaps your overpowering strength to cover the world is seen more in the feet of the tiny grass blades than even in the roots of the oak. In spite of different stages of progress, we are all walking to one and the same destination. When you stand behind and prompt me to mount hills and climb peaks, I have only to think of your sturdy legs that can overcome any hurdle. If there is a rocky mountain that hinders my path, I know you will not bother to blast the rocks away. Instead you will teach me to melt in love and gently direct myself at the blockage like a river and overcome it by slowly finding a path by which I can circumvent it and flow in a different direction.



30. चं सर्वस्तम्भिणी

All paths are yours, so why should I bother whether I climb or flow? If I am to become a cascade, I will also laugh with it and in the sparkling foam I will see your world reflected a millionfold. The music of the cascade is similar to a symphony which soars into high pitches and softens into a murmuring silence. How wonderful that I can become all these just by thinking of you. What is so wonderful about you is that you have no fixed structure. Fast changing strategies are as acceptable to you as consistency. Omnipresence can sometimes hide behind all-out absence.

I sometimes see you as the immeasurable peak of Meru. When I entertain thoughts of your insurmountability, I see the soft head of a summer cloud wafting into my presence from over the head of the peak. You allow it. You do not lose anything if it pleases a gentle cloud to pass over you. When I see that, I know that my heart should not become heavy, ruminating on thoughts of being deceived or of someone scheming. Every day each thing you place before me has a direct message for me. You are not like other teachers who give sermons or instructions. To learn a lesson from you, I should become you. Then you will become the warmth of my body. Keeping the rhythmic pace of my breath, you will give a silent message to every corpuscle in my blood and to every tissue of my body. For that, words are not required to articulate, ears are not required to listen. Nor are the lessons to be interpreted or commented upon.

Where there is such an intense delight that I burst out into laughter, the very fact that I am beside myself is a sure indication that I am no more myself. You have become me. When, in the intensity of pain, I lose consciousness and helplessly go into the timeless depth of the unknown, you are there. And the very darkness that blinds my eyes and the non-being that devours my self is your supreme Self. I am praised and I blush with embarrassment; then I realize that the hymns sung before me were all to praise you and I only mistook that they were meant for my tiny self. When I am reproached and taken to task, I realize that you have a quick and sharp way to change ugliness to beauty and convert the unreal into the real.

The way in which you transfer everything belonging to you to everyone identified with you is the only secret of love. It is a lesson so simple to learn. Yet it is so hard to know that such a lesson being given by you is that easily recognized. Where the desire and the action prompted

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by desire have no agent, it is no longer desire or action but only a fulfillment of your love. All victory to you.

॥ *caṁ sarvastambhīṇī* ॥

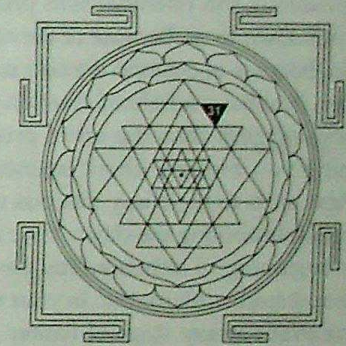
Verse Thirty-one

caṁ sarvajṛmbhīṇī

O Mother Sarvatantramayī, creation was initiated by opening the door of the primeval egg in which the essence of the spirit took refuge. It was like breathing life into a universal possibility. For a short while it looked as if nothing happened. The egg closed its mouth and seemed to go into sleep. Then started the chemistry of creation — the breaking of the cell and the proliferation of its replicas. What went into the primeval egg was the very secret of the Creator's breath. It was as if a lamp was lit in the new abode of life.

The fetus (*prajā*) and its programmer (*pati*) are fused into one (*prajāpati*). Even before the egg develops into a fetus a secret computing is made of the eighty or hundred years which the incumbent person has to live. Its purpose and meaning, the ways and means of actualizing value after value until one arrives at the final destination — all these are to be glanced at. Almost instantaneously thereafter the growing cell is presided over by the programmer (*prajāpati*). All basic requirements are epitomized and kept in the ovum and the sperm. All of this put together provides the required materials out of which the person can be fashioned with a gross body which gradually enters into several shades of subtlety and ultimately disappears in the mystery of an unknown oversoul. That is how the potential becomes more and more vivid, almost like the sculpture, painting or music of an artist. That is the beginning of *kalā* (art). There are sixty-four *kalās* already conceived by the Lord. Now it is up to you, Mother, to give us the advantage of each one of these arts as applicable in our lives.

We know that you are not mixing earth with water, kneading it into our shape to bake in fire, and bringing us out into your resemblance by breathing into our nostrils and placing us in the space you donate. That is too simplified a picture. Your scheme is a slow process of concretization in which we are given an internal watery environment where the body



31. छं सर्वजृम्भिणी

temperature is measured and adjusted with metabolic secrets. You have given us this respiration system, coupled with a circulatory system, to last a whole lifetime. You started the art of creation without any parent machine or separate laboratory for synthesizing the rare chemicals with which we are created, yet you do it with such engineering perfection and effectiveness. Do we have another example in this world of this unique model of creation which you have been bringing about so silently in the course of a few months?

Evidently the potential was projected into the actual. The potential was unknown to us. Because of the actual we presume there was potential. Again, because of creation we also surmise the possibility of an intelligent creator. You have serialized creation with many specific patterns. Nothing is more magical than the art of proliferation. As if out of nowhere and nothing you brought about masses of material which range from the hardest teeth to the slimy mucous membranes, all appropriately placed, one complementing the other. Your art of fusion (*kalanam*) is probably the very beginning of alchemy. You have the special skill to fuse space with time and spirit with matter. In your creation there is no waste and nothing is irrelevant at any stage of fusion.

It was probable that there was nothing but the all-filling water. You brought into it the repository of all future promises in the form of this good earth which set boundaries for your water; then there was the ocean and the dry land. To the earth itself you have given a circulatory system to moisten it. In the deep of the water, in the marshes, on land and in the moist atmosphere you have extended specifications of your scheme of creation. You have your own scheme of thermodynamics and electromagnetism that are not to be sought in laboratory works. They are here and now in the spit-bug, the grasshopper, and the mosquito, as well as in the volcano and the dying star. These devices and their operation are not confined to anywhere in the world because they are the world.

You have a chemical scheme to produce an electrical impulse (*prakāśa*) from which evolves a sensory system that can interpret the response to a stimulus as painful or pleasurable, to be accepted or to be rejected. As you are the artist and also the critic, it is the interpretation in the sensory system that gives us the quality of life. Life is the quintessence of its glow and the lyric sung in its praise.

You have a number of triads to shade your art from the most vivid to the most obscure. In *sattva* you have a clear-cut idea which comes as an intuitive flash. You color and enrich it with the elaboration of *rajas*. Then you fix it with the inertial freezing of *tamas*. Every bit of you is a unit of knowledge in the tri-basic form of the knower, known, and knowledge. It amuses you to chop the continuity of time into the past, present, and future. Under our feet we mark the alpha on which we can stand firm. From there, we can rise into the atmosphere, then reach still farther, beyond the clouds, to the unending sky. Just as everything has dimensions, you have decided that the very concept of matrix should be of length, breadth and height. You have even fashioned three gods, Brahmā, Viṣṇu and Maheśvara. With these you make small pellets of integral values. Each monad is a container of a probability that can actualize. It is the *dharma*. When *dharma* is released it becomes *karma*. For the release of *karma* you give the stimulation of a desire (*kāma*). *Kāma* is dynamic; it inspires, compels and bursts out as an irresistible volcano. That inspiring force is *codanā* which is also the mark of *dharma*.

The irresistible restlessness to inquire into, to reach out, to examine, to verify and prove to oneself is the interrogative disposition, the mind (*manas*). Where there is no question there is no mind. It is the dynamic of a question which manifests as the compulsive mind. Where mind comes, it unravels and pulls away the veils that cover up all forms. The form is *ākāra*. *Ākāra* is the creative mold; it also decides how the indweller of each form has to act so that when beings emerge from the amorphous, the world becomes an aggregate of divergent forms, each one needing to be recognized with a special name.

You have a million eyes and a million minds because you have invested each of your creatures with a mind. Consequently each one's light is turned upon itself or himself or herself as well as being flashed onto the other. The light that looks outward is an eye of perception and the light that looks inward is a critical mind. The heterogeneity of the senses is to be brought into convergence with the homogeneity of a single mind. Outward analysis and inward synthesis are happening simultaneously. There has to be an all-comprehending eye and an all-systematizing rationale. Human intelligence is not satisfied and cannot be satisfied with what is immediately presented to the senses. It is interested in everything and everybody, not

only of the immediate present but of the beginningless past and even of the unimaginable future.

The wheel of life emerges with the monads of the elements. On the axle of time it rotates. Each one's ego-consciousness provides it with a hub. All these are schematically represented by the *praṇava* which has the four wheels of: over-all consciousness (*bodha cakra*); the biologic incentive (*jīva cakra*); the action-potential (*karma cakra*); and the material subsistence (*vastu cakra*). There is another fourfold scheme in your creation: the natural propensities are held together by *dharma* (lawful order); for the actualization of *dharma*, *artha* (meaning of life) is given; the dynamics of actualization come from *kāma* (desire) and the final transcendence from *mokṣa* (liberation). Each of the sixty-four *kalās* has, as in the I Ching, an upper trigram and an lower trigram, constituting the thirty-two *cit* aspects and the thirty-two *jaḍa* aspects. They also correspond to the genetic code.

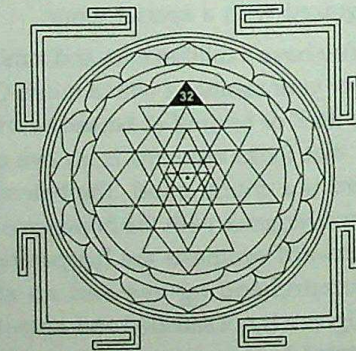
When the fact of creation and the myth of creation are consolidated we get a vision in which Śiva is synchronized with Śakti. Your eternal dance of creation (*lāsya*) becomes punctuated with the Lord's dance of destruction (*tāṇḍava*). Such is the mysterious scheme of the sixty-four modes of your creation. No wonder you are Sarvatantreśvarī. Teach me, my Mother. Initiate me into your secret.

॥ *cham sarvajambhīnī* ॥

Verse Thirty-two

jām sarvavaśamkāri

O Mother, conjoiner of parts, when we wake and look above we see a vast stretch of an infinite sky studded with twinkling stars and the sun and moon. Underneath our feet we have this earth itself as a footstool. When did all this come into being? We do not know. Will it all some day vanish from us? That also we do not know. But in our consciousness each part comes from an unknown and unconscious depth, bearing a name and reminding us of several associated conceptions. We can neither imagine nor express our experiencing of these without formulating consonants and vowels with which we spell out their names.



32. जं सर्ववशंकरी

Just as we see the sky or earth, a tree or man with our mind's eye, we see the consonants of the alphabet and the appropriate vowels with which they can be wedded into a meaningful relationship. Once this is accomplished, our vital breath is willing to be their vehicle to transport them from the world of our hearts' impression to the external world of transactional expression. If the consonants are the body of a *mantra*, its soul is the melodious musicality of the vowels (*svara*). When the two are combined it becomes a colorful presentation (*varṇa*). An elaborate picture is woven with words in praise of truth (*ṛk*) and sung with rhythmic grace (*sāma*). The word and breath rejoice together. It is such a music and dance of jubilation that comes from the core of ourselves to fill the atmosphere of this world.

The most external impression of the music of the spirit flashes back from the firmament as the shining celestial bodies. If every star in the sky is a cupid to every other celestial body, in the inner space of consciousness there is not a single thought or an isolated idea which is not curious to know how many other thoughts are hidden in the unconscious and how many are already in the arena of mind's imagination and recalled memory with which the mind is fabricated, the intellect is challenged, the memory is mimicked and the ego-sense is made to plunge into its fanciful affectivity of pain and pleasure.

Thus, three great areas are decorated according to your taste: the world of words, intellectual criticism and the inner breeding ground of ever-new suggestions that are fed into the gross and the subtle. Corresponding to these we hear of the secret of the beautifier of the three cities (*tripurasundarīrahasya*) and the secret of the psychodynamics of the *mantra* (*mantrākṣararahasya*). These secrets are not discernible by the reason of the uninitiated. They are called *Śiva* and *Śakti*, *Kāma* and *Kṣiti*, *Ravi* and *Soma*, and the triads of *Smara*, *Harṁsa* and *Indra*, *Parā*, *Māra* and *Hari*. Through an inward vision of mystical penetration, each one is to be known as a mystical reality.

Śiva and *Śakti* are not to be confined to personalized concepts. Only by immersing deep into a serenity that goes beyond even the silence of total absorption (*pralaya*) can one know *Śiva* through an identity of cancelling out the subject and the object. A magical flow is always happening between cause and effects and the relation of counterparts

which gives the cohesion and continuity that is implied in the all (*sarvam*). Only when individual recognition is totally merged in its oceanic infinitude does Śakti become a reality. Again, the sun and moon are not to be seen as a star and a satellite. The Self has a numinous integrity not shared by any other light. It is self-founded and is radiating in all directions, not as a physical energy but as the one spiritual insight to which all individuated selves belong, like the rays of sunlight belong to the sun.

The relationship between the sun and moon is one of the original and the presentative. What looks like the brilliance of the moon is the image or reflection (*pratibimba*). This is how the conscious psychic world of the four inner organs is animated by the central Self. If the Self is the sun, the psychic world is the mirroring moon (*soma*). It has within it a lunatic spirit which maddens the psyche. In the field of the psyche, like waves rising one after another, emotional fluctuations come with the swaying wind of desire, which in their turn weaken the individuated self and deteriorate its counterpart, the object of pleasure. These two are bracketed as the desire (*kāma*) and the moral world (*kṣiti*). Three principles are always operating in this inner world which has the horizon of the unconscious marking the frontier of individual awareness and a depth that is concealed from the person which is a storehouse of the incipient memories of the past. They are the libidinal energy which is bubbling up as a pre-conditioned memory (*smara*). *Smara* prompts the five organs of sensory perception and the motivated organs of action (*indra*).

It in turn is controlled and regulated by inquiry, evaluation, judgment and value affectivity which are all ordained by the individual's consciousness in which resides the clear vision of wisdom (*hṛīṣa*). Thus the triple principles in the subliminal field are *smara*, *indra* and *hṛīṣa*.

This immanent aspect has a transcendental counterpart which is designated as *parā*. The *parā* and the *aparā* can never be cut asunder into two. The link between the two is *māra*. The eternal continuation is kept alive as *hari*. These are the secrets to be discerned by the seer of the *mantra* (*mantradrāṣṭā*). Those who are eternally consigned to the flames of contemplation alone come into this path of unbroken devotion. Grosser than gross is the external world. Very subtle is the world where meaning is concealed in sound. In all these, in a world of greater secret resides the

cause behind all causes. It is from that inaccessible silence everything comes into being.

Even then, one can initiate oneself into the secret of this contemplative search only by turning to the details of the external world. Even the simple sight of the shining sun or a tiny little flower causes within us a spark of joy. Thus there is a secret link between the objective vision and the subjective in-depth glow of bliss. The key of our search lies in this link. The Absolute that is spoken of, the transcendental that is intellectually described, are all only shadows of shadows. We ultimately come to you and throw away all crutches into the ever-burning fire of desirelessness. Thereafter, we are not there to make a request or a prayer. *AUM*.

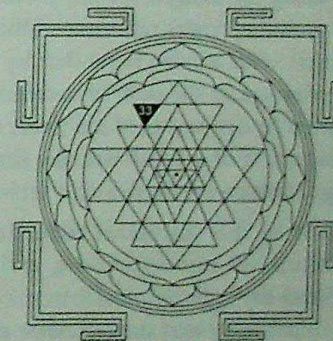
॥ jaṁ sarvavaśaṁkarī ॥

Verse Thirty-three

śaṁ sarvaraṅjanī

O Mother, Sarvaraṅjanī, innumerable are your powers to make everyone overwhelmed with ecstasy. Even a dewdrop is capable of radiating all the seven colors of the rainbow and causing a delightful illusion of seeing ruby in one moment and emerald in the next. Even though it evaporates away in a few minutes, it bespeaks how many wonders you have invested in every atom of this universe. Though the spherical body of the pearl-like dewdrop is so very small, it does not complain that it cannot mirror the entire sky and the horizon with all its details. It is with the same principle that you have structured the Self of all of us. Like the dewdrop, we also reflect in every brain cell the world you have spread out outside and the meaning you have inscribed within.

Like the alphabet characters holding each other to make a meaningful language, the dreaming glories of your mirrored beauty hold each other's image in a bewitching embrace to prove to us, your helpless children, how deep is your concern to make us rejoice in your sensibility. You borrow the divine eyes of Lakṣmī, the goddess of grace, and grant us the great boon of looking at the charm and benign grace of every beautiful form just as Lakṣmī herself sees. When we revel in such a festival of



33. शं सर्वरञ्जनी

beauty, we forget every apprehension we had of this world, which is sometimes misunderstood as a world of misery. Of all knowledge, the most astounding wisdom is the wonder of seeing the all-embracing beauty with which every form is bedecked and every name is sung in praise.

We do not forget that your Lord is the annihilator of Smara, the god of erotic memories. The cancellation of the sensuous disturbance caused by erotic memory was indeed the most positive shaft of supreme love by which the Lord saw his counterpart as the immeasurable beauty of his own dear self. So it is no wonder that you are offering us here the *kāmarājabīja* to initiate ourselves into the meditation for self-actualization. We begin with *aiṁ*, the *kāmarājabīja*; and with *hrīm* we enter into the *bhuvaneśvarabīja* and finally with *śrīm* we return to your own glory. In the *śrībīja* all the flames of delight that have sprung from our own countless predispositions and endless actions recoil to the stupendous light of self-knowledge. We do not need any more actions to be our crutches.

It is as if the eye that looks for light is filled with its own brilliance and the ear that is eager to listen is flooded with the boundless *nāda* of the *parā*. Such being the delight, we are liberated from the folly with which we have been pursuing many ratiocinated thoughts and calculated relativistic ideals of action with a false hope that by being good and doing good we will some day get to the path of excellence. When a spark of fire catches on to the grass or dry leaves of the forest and the entire forest is subjected to the conflagration of a brush fire, the fire does not wait to question which tree brings forth sweet berries and which tree brings evil fruits.

It is in this universal reduction that the mind becomes rid of all questions, all remembrances, and all identity. In the equation that is rendered through wholesale burning, the all is equated with nothing and both numerator and denominator are reduced to a unitive silence. In that silence the pearl that surpasses all prizes is recognized as the supreme wisdom of Śiva, Cintāmaṇi. All the searches made for it through countless lives were of no avail. Finally it reveals itself as the core reality which every seeker had in his or her heart all through their lives. It is this realization that surpasses all the wonders with which you have been amusing your children in the eternal sport of your *līlā*. O grand rejoicer, your victory is our victory. Hail. Hail.

॥ śaṁ sarvaraṅjanī ॥

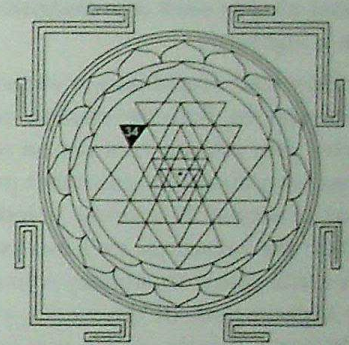
Verse Thirty-four

jñān sarvonmādinī

O Mother, rejoicer in the rejoicings of all, when this eye sees a flower, that simple experience is comprised of the radiance of the sun, the beautiful design and fascinating color of the petals of the flower and a thrill in the perception of beauty. Thus, heaven, earth and the Self all come together as a confection of joy in which no one bothers to know what is inside and what is outside. If a simple flower can unify the earth, heaven, and the conscious appreciation of the Self, how great is the unitive appreciation in which the sun and moon and all the shimmering stars of the sky, and every panorama of the world, and the countless millions thrilled by inner thoughts and outer perception come together. If that enormous world of frontierless vision and the collective joy to which all sentient beings are subjected are not circumscribed by small circles designated with the triviality of I-consciousness, there is nothing to separate a person from another.

When an artist paints a picture his brush goes into all kinds of pigments, bright and dark, warm and cool. The variation he makes is not to destroy the pleasure of the seeing eye. It is only to enhance the beauty of vision by creating contrasts and complementarity between strokes and colors. Even so, in the divine order of things, pleasures are fleeting and pains are also equally vanishing. We learn the secret lesson of your loving care both from the smiles of pleasure and the tears of pain. You have different modes to fashion passing moments to suit the temperaments of each one of us. Unfortunately we pull our shutters when you have arranged a table for a feast in the neighbor's house.

We hear that the distance between two stars can be sometimes measured only in terms of light years but you do not mind presenting a million stars to our gaze all at once. Such is your sense of bounty and generosity in sharing. Day or night, in the wakeful hour or in the dream, in the sleepless night or in the contemplative hour of beatitude, you do not miss a chance to pass on to each one of us some measure of joy. The source hardly matters. Sometimes it is a garden bird singing. At another time it is a grandmother telling a story. It comes to us through the inventions and innovations of scientists and technologists. It can be the



34. ज्ञं सर्वोन्मादिनी

sight of a leaf circling in the air as it falls to the ground. Sometimes for no reason you tickle our memory and we recall a name so dear to us. When we have no control of ourselves and we sleep, oblivious to everything around us, you send us a fascinating dream or playfully shake our wits with a nightmare.

Thus your programing is endless. It is not confined to one person or to one species. Both the animate and inanimate members of this world receive your catering. If a person rejoices only in the most ephemeral of things, you do not consider that person ignoble or not worthy of being loved or served. If someone is feeble and devoid of strength to get up and do the hazardous exercises you give, you allow that person to lie down and sleep. To another who is stubborn and determined to climb the highest peak of the world, you are only too ready to rouse his enthusiasm. It looks almost as if you rejoice in the game of pushing the goal of the resolute farther and farther.

This enormous game has been going on in this world from the dawn of its creation. In conformity with your wish humanity has been accepting the challenge with dedication. In response to that, on the face of the globe, many are the cities they have erected. Many are the networks of conveyance and communication that have been created. The surface of earth, the waters of the ocean, the sky above and even outer space, have all been surveyed and charted, with travel routes neatly laid out so that even the slightest joy known to anyone can be easily relayed and shared with so many others, not only of the present. Joys have been perceived and chronicled for the future.

Thus human life has become an activity of telling everyone the good news that there is hope. The poor are given the hope that they can become rich in so many ways, rich in their coffers, rich in their knowledge, rich in their hearts, rich in their friendships. Those who are weak are nursed back to health. Those who are weak in understanding are given the right perspective. Those who have become anemic, without tasting the invigorating sweetness of love, are shown the path of love. To those whose minds were cluttered with unclear ideas and vague notions, clear knowledge is transferred, which has given them certitude and a will to reach out to new avenues of truth. To many who were benumbed with exposure to cruelty and poverty of experience, a new consciousness is given which

makes them sensible to the finest shades of beauty. To some who had become callous and cruel, with despotic ideas, you showed the virtue of becoming humble and serving one's brother by turning strength into compassion and aggressiveness into the loving kindness of a good Samaritan.

When we snatch a moment from our days and nights of crowded programs we see that what we individuals understand and appreciate in our daily lives is only an insignificant edge of the enormous benevolence that you are showering upon us. More and more we are exposed to the positive joy of your kindness. We begin to see how the divine manifests in all. Even in a gentle touch we get the message of the whole world. Just as we are electrified with a whisper of friendly assurance, we find ourselves lucky to pass on that joyous message to everyone in our neighborhood. When neighborhoods are interwoven, the whole world becomes a neighborhood. Then it does not matter to us if we have not seen your face, if you have a face. By holding our neighbor's hand we can identify the touch of that hand as your loving touch. All this is happening like many single strokes an artist puts on his canvas or notes a musician plays on the keyboard — they are all immersed in the collective manifestation of the beauty that is created as a picture or the harmony that is brought forth in a symphony. So it is no wonder that you are recognized as the collective knowledge of our common awareness.

Beneath such vivid actions and gentle performances, there is a vast field of the subjective phenomena which you are generating through dreams. All our civilizations and cultural expansions have come from the dreams you have put into our minds. Thus you are not only spreading out yourself in our wakeful selves but you also enthrall us in the subconscious. When you see we are tired and cannot take any more, you give us greater rest. Like an ocean which has become tranquil, you take away the ripples of all thoughts and in deep sleep we become rested. Regaining strength and stamina, we wake up. Some of us are so fortunate that we get an equal measure of peaceful beatitude when we transcend the hefty transactions of life and the pain-pleasure dualities. Such is your all-filling compassion.

When we sit around reveling in our small talk or singing together or playing together we are in a number of small worlds. Each one is like a

colorful light that is a spectacular aspect of our small measures of joy called *pramoda*. Even on such occasions there is a witnessing consciousness in each one of us which is not limited by our bodily trivialities. The inner consciousness has no special occasion. It is inner as well as outer. As we pass on from one game to another or one joke to another this consciousness continues as a serene joyous insight of life. It is like the several sensory messages going into the one mind and generating the consciousness of living with all. We call it *moda*.

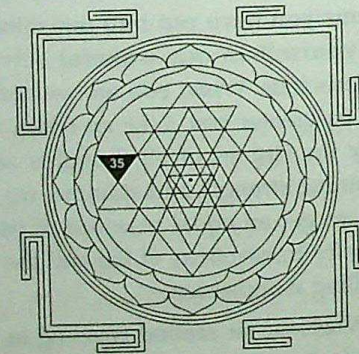
When we are delighted and when we are not delighted, life does not remain static. It is always on the lookout for the new moment approaching us. Every moment is like a messenger coming from you, bringing us the gospel of tomorrow. At once, we get into alertness. A new moment has several potentials and possibilities which are all designed by you. It is for us to pick up the probabilities with courage and transform as many of them as possible into actualities. In the spearhead of life's motivations and actualizations we have our daily approach to the fulfillment and goal of life which we call *sukha*. Sitting behind us as the propelling force and an untiring enthusiasm, you are pushing us on and on to make this life a tremendous success, with each individual's contribution to the general good and the good of all. We call it *ānanda*.

॥ jñān sarvonmādinī ॥

Verse Thirty-five

ṭaṁ sarvārthasādhani

O Mother, actualizer of all ideals, when I meditate on the central locus of your establishment (*bindusthāna*), I become stabilized in the *ājñā*, the center of my eyebrows. Mind is said to be bubbling from there as interrogations followed by streams of thoughts. By nature, you are musical vibrations (*nādarūpiṇī*). Although you are said to originate in the sky beyond (*parākāśa*), you pass through the entire universe and formulate artistic creation out of each element, bringing forth their most adorable beauty such as the ranges of the mountains scraping the sky with their snowy peaks, the billowy sea swelling up at high tide and receding at low tide, the cool fire glowing in the fireflies and the scorching fire blazing in the



35. तं सर्वार्थसाधनी

sun, the gentle breeze caressing the petals of flowers and the tornado uprooting an entire city. You hold the whole earth to your bosom in a universal embrace.

It is this sport of yours that makes you Kalāvati, the goddess of art. You are so merciful that you have shared with me the power to change my mind into all the elaborations of your creation and to form the most appropriate words to describe you in the *sāgās* I sing and in the *mantras* I meditate. Like a lark that flies to the heights of the blue sky, sings its songs to the mountains and valleys, then perches on a familiar tree and sits in silence, I will also stretch my wings, soar into your several heavens and come back to roost in my heart center. After gathering my thoughts to the core of myself, after having found the secret of your silence, I once again come out to sing to the world the many delights of knowledge. Pleased with my devotion, you have cleansed my thoughts and purified my words so that I can now confidently sing my praise of truth.

Many are the embodied beings in this world but all are animated with one and the same vital breath. As Prāṇeśvarī, you are both the breath we are breathing in and the breath we are breathing out. When we breathe in, the fragrance of the entire universe comes to the core of our own being and every culture imbibed by all and sundry is fused with our own inner light. Similarly, when we breathe out, all that we have obtained through a million lives radiates from us like the rays of the sun and carries the essence of our being to all the known and unknown expansion of your being. In the rhythmic alternation of the *anāhata* of my heart, there is never any break. Considering the vigilance with which you keep the life-giving breath continuously transpired, you seem to be more devoted to your children than any one of us are capable of remembering and caring for you.

The growth of a crystal is hardly noticed by anyone. Even mothers do not see how their children are growing into maturity. When the oak rises into the sky from an acorn, when does it bring forth a new sprout, a new limb and new leaves? We do not see. Even so, you have invested in us a secret nucleus (*maṇipūra*), around which, like a snowball, our perfection grows moment after moment. Thus it is your delight to make each one a pearl of priceless worth. After having made the same kind of body for an entire species, you put at the root of our genitals the mark of

our uniqueness. Thereafter even when I am surrounded by a million, I think my thoughts separately, I feel my likes and dislikes separately, I take my resolutions all by myself. Now, what is true in me — my universality or my uniqueness? You have given all of us this rare skill to dance together and also to withdraw and sit back and be all alone. You have made this exclusiveness of our bodies and the inclusiveness of our minds.

After we were born with bodies, you granted each of us a space that is to be occupied by our body. After each body carries out its purpose, whether it is buried or burned, you reabsorb it into the five elements. The spirit with which we have been thinking and feeling, meditating and intuiting, that spark of spirit is reabsorbed into you. Thus you are born into all this and we all die into you. Life and death have become the dual aspects of the same pulsation. You are the universal pulsation (*viśvaspanda*). May I meditate on you as the pulsation and be absorbed in the non-pulsating being. I take refuge in your equipoise, *auṁ nispaṇḍam*.

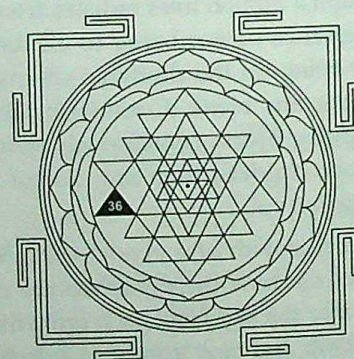
॥ ॐ sarvārthasādhanaḥ ॥

Verse Thirty-six

ॐ sarvasampattipūrāṇi

O graceful Mother, mystics and philosophers who have been looking for a model of creation have come to three general visions. Some of them think of God as the universal father, who, having decided that there should be worlds inhabited by beings of several orders, conceived the archetypal model of manifestation and invested it in the universal womb of nature. From it arose distinguishable bodies of several kinds, each representing a species, each of which has propagated its kind. With a continuous change of cause and effect, all these creations continue their functions. Each one has a distinguishable form and name and natural disposition to act according to its integral nature. This is one view. In that view, both the cause and effect belong to this world. Therefore, its relevancy is in the here and now.

There is another vision which is mystically more subtle and profound. According to that view, the kingdom of God is within one's heart. The Supreme is existence, subsistence, and bliss, and it is enshrined in every



36. ॐ सर्वसम्पत्तिपूरणी

heart as the immortal indweller. When we take it in that sense, God is the Supreme Self and the individual person is a dweller in this body as its animating spirit. The third view is that everything is created by the Word of God. This vision of creation is supported by St. John and the Upaniṣads — *Māṇḍūkya*, *Chāndogya* and *Maitri*.

When these three world-views are looked into, they are the vision of superimposition, the vision of evolution and a combined theory of both superimposition and evolution. When we look at the several worlds within us in a graded manner, we come to our conscious self arising from *ājñā* which is located in the center of the eyebrows. If you go to the origin of a river and watch how it gushes forth from a fountain, it looks as if it has no beginning. There is a continuous flow of water. When we turn our minds to the spot between our eyebrows, we see a continuous flow of thoughts as if the stream of consciousness is a hidden river.

There is a belief in India that apart from the two great rivers, Indus and Ganges, there is also a third river, Sarasvatī, running underground. The *ājñā cakra* is equated to Sarasvatī. There is always a new thought coming. In no other part of our bodies do we find a sensitivity equal to that of the spot between the two eyebrows. At the *ājñā* all the ideas are presenting themselves as thoughts and feelings. Orders are given from this center for intrapersonal reaction and interpersonal encounter. *Ājñā* means "giving command". In a way we can say our lives are being monitored from the *ājñā*. Like the hidden river of Sarasvatī, our thoughts are also hidden from others.

As we live in a society and our expressions are expected to be disciplined, we sort out our words and thoughts. Words which are likely to be beneficial to the world are chosen to be spoken. We get a continuous supply of words to express our finest thoughts through our organ of speech. This *cakra* is called *viśuddhi*. To maintain life's purity and to have a peaceful environmental security, we are expected to speak only truthful words in a sweet manner. Both the thoughts that arise in the *ājñā* and the words which originate in the *viśuddhi* are of course controlled by our hearts.

Although thoughts are meant to be regulated by our brains, our ethical concerns come from our hearts. The heart is the seat of love and the continuing persuasion that comes from it has to be ever-present. That

region is called *anāhata* (the unbroken). The heart keeps watch over the reasoning faculty and over the faculty of speech. Both are regulated, restrained and expressed, always with the consent of the heart. These three major faculties — thoughts, speech and appreciation — will always have an impact on our growth and perfection. The control area for our growth is called *maṇipūra*. It is like a pearl of perfection.

We have two more areas to look into. We have a conscious mind, prompted by urges and motivations. It comes in part as a manifestation of nature's scheme in us, as continuators of our species and also as the agents of nature. It is in this area we find the foundation of our personality. It is called *svādhiṣṭhāna*. The word literally means "one's own foundation". The last area is the repository of all our biological needs and the secret home of our unconscious. It is called the base foundation, *mūlādhāra*. Only a very small percentage of our activities are coming from our conscious minds.

We find a graded hierarchical arrangement from *mūlādhāra* to *ājñā* given in this world vision. In spite of separate regions and separate functions you have made us whole so that we can remain unbroken in ourselves and in our realization. The entire world is like our own self and we do not see anything outside it. Our prayer is that you keep us whole and thinking of the whole world as one. We always seek your grace. Salutations.

॥ ॐ sarvasampattipūrāṇi ॥

Verse Thirty-seven

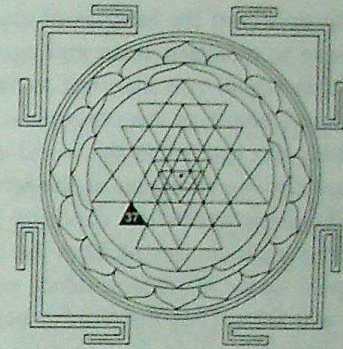
ॐ sarvamantramayī

O Mother of wisdom, from here and now we look into the yonder and the all-embracing. We feel like comparing you to the infinitude of the clear sky in which whatever has been granted space both for a location to exist and freedom to move. The sky and its vacuity bring us also to the notion of the all-illuminating light and its transparency when it is pure. It is only natural that we think of the pure light of the sun whenever we have to conceive of pure illumination and pure transparency. For that reason, knowledge is

equated with light and ignorance with darkness. As such analogies are common, it is normal to think of gradations of light ranging from the opaque to the translucent and the translucent to the transparent as representing considerations such as that of absolute certitude, the idea of the probable, and confusions of various sorts.

All these references are implied in knowledge. Knowledge opens up the doors of conception and intuitive illumination which present themselves as pure visions of truth. For consideration of the amplitude of the epistemological field that covers the known and the unknown, the conscious and the unconscious, we think of the Absolute. If the Absolute is equivalent to the noumenon, its counterpart is the phenomenon. In the case of ordinary folk, the gateway to knowledge is the spoken or written word. The word as a symbol has the disadvantage of projecting a preconditioned conceptual picture or gestaltation. The relationship between sound and meaning is a color or shade that interferes with the clarity of both the mirrored noumenon and the relativistic factors of the phenomenon. In either case, we are exposed to the tyranny or grace of words impressed with fixed notions of meaning. As all words are articulated from the throat plex (*viśuddhi*), we see it as a sportive field where the mother of language conducts her delightful *lāsya* (gentle dance), introducing us to several shades of meaning and nuances of appreciation.

It is well known that your Lord is occupying the whole of the space of consciousness (*cidambara* or *cidākāśa*). The noumenon and the sky which Śiva occupies are inseparable. If the vision of the Lord eludes our comprehension it is because of the transparency of pure consciousness and its all-filling serenity. The rosary, often considered as a symbol of the mother of wisdom, is said to be made of all the characters of the alphabet. Each consonant and vowel is transparent like a pure crystal with no color of its own. But when light rays fall on a many-faceted crystal, its transparency is replaced by a bewitching flash of color which fills the onlooker with a sense of wonder. However enjoyable is the colorful world of the refracted rays, it transports us from the pure-clear vision of the Self to a colored illusion of phenomenality. Thus the *viśuddhi* brings us to the magical world where the musicality of the sound, the conceptual flourish of meaning, and its poetic or lyrical suggestibility create complex inner experiencing which can either be entertaining or confusing.



37. ङ सर्वमन्त्रमयी

To steer past the fantasia of experience to our truth-seeking minds, we have to meditate again and again on the crystalline quality of each sound in which you manifest as Sarvamantramayī. What is spoken as word and heard as the conceptual key that opens up a vast world of meaning can lead us in the world of time and space as objects of value interest that we recognize as the actualities of phenomenal existence. The descent from hypostatic concepts to the hierophany of actuals has its counterpart in an ascent from the luring effect of the sensory world to the pure space of transcendence where there is no distinction between Śiva and Śakti. Thus the word is both a binding principle and the key to deliverance.

All individuated beings are endowed with distinctive ways of relating themselves with the basic nature of the Self (*ānanda*). In the gross world it is the enjoyment of a pleasure object. In the subjective world only the essence of conceptual visions and the sense of fulfillment are available for enjoyment. When one transcends words and thoughts, both transactions and subjective visions cease to function; one goes into the pure nature of the Self, attaining *sarvarūpānanda*, one's own pure blissful nature. The mythical *cakora* bird is said to be satisfying its thirst and hunger by licking the beauty of the moonbeams. The moon has no light of its own; it only reflects the light of the sun. Thus the representative character of the symbol of *ānanda* is very well portrayed in such an example. Both in the wakeful and in the dream, the phenomena that are enjoyed are of the nature of superimposition. However, the qualitative satisfaction of participating in one's own pure value-basis is fulfilled at least for the time being.

When one brings one's meditation from the *ājñā* to the *viśuddhi*, there also one can soar high into pure enjoyment, making a breakthrough from the conceptual world of meaning by tuning oneself to the cosmic symphony (*nāḍabrahma*). This is accomplished by acquiring the highly discriminative power of attuning oneself to the pure vibrancy of the *cidākāśa* or *parākāśa*. The swan (*hamsa*) symbolizes wisdom discrimination in its purest form. Hence, Śiva and Śakti are seen here as two heavenly swans. Thus, it is in the area of worldly jubilation that one also attains the supreme bliss of total transcendence. To achieve that blessed state we seek your grace, Mother, to reveal to us that every *mantra* is ultimately leading us to your own transparency. Our obeisance to you.

॥ *ḍam sarvamantramayī* ॥

Verse Thirty-eight

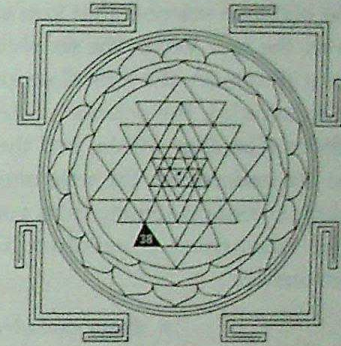
ḍham sarvadvandvakṣayamkarī

O Mother, the unifying symphony of the manifold, the wise one is often compared to a bumble bee that feeds itself on the pollen, sips the honey and lives within the petals of a lotus flower. You and your Lord have chosen the thousand-petaled lotus for your union. The lotus is known to bloom in dirt-filled pools. However, it is glorified as the purest of all manifestations. Similarly, in this world of filth, ignorance and distress, the flower of wisdom blossoms like a great miracle, like *Śiva* and *Śakti* reveling in the heavenly lake of contemplation.

From the transcendental *sahasrāra* you descend into the musical world of thoughts and poetry and rejoice in the hymns that are constantly chanted. From the *viśuddhi* you come to the heart center (*anāhata*). The heart is another secret symbol described in wisdom texts as a lotus flower (*puṇḍarīka*) which has within it a small space that holds in it everything in this world and what is not even here. Entering that world and knowing the matchless is described as knowing the *bhūmā*, the highest excellence in the world of wisdom. Compared to that attainment, everything that people aspire for is looked upon as meagre (*tuccham*). Bringing the excellence of transcendence from the thousand-petaled lotus to the lotus in the heart is like experiencing transcendence in the immanent.

On seeing the heavenly Gaṅgā trickling from the matted hair of *Śiva*, I wonder whether it is the tears of joy that are trickling from the *ājñā* of Mother. As you are the unifier of all diversity in the unitive wisdom that sparks off from your *ājñā*, it is no wonder that the unbroken melody which we now hear in the heart plex (*anāhata*) is only a counterpoint that is resonating from your imperiential ecstasy.

It is from the *viśuddhi* that the psychodynamics of *mantra* fills all consonants and vowels with word power and makes the spoken word so powerful as to unite all speakers and listeners in their collective consciousness. Therefore it is only appropriate to think of the awareness of *Śiva*-consciousness (*Śivajñānabodham*) as identical with the sheen of the crescent which the Lord is wearing in his matted hair. It is that moonlight which the female partridge (*cahora*), is enjoying in the throat plex as the mother of all muses, *Vāgeśvarī*.



38. ढं सर्वद्वन्द्वक्षयंकरी

In the throat plex (*viśuddhī*) where word (*vāk*) and vital breath (*prāṇa*) are coupled to produce sound (*śabda*) and meaning (*artha*), the revelation of truth happens like a great wonder. It comes to the seekers of the world as the eighteen sciences that you and your Lord are gracefully sharing with us: the four Vedas, the six philosophical visions, the three groups of legends (*Purāṇas*), the ethical scriptures (*Dharmaśāstras*), the science of life (*Ayurveda*), the science of defence (*Dhanurveda*), the science of subtleties (*Gandharvaveda*) and the exegeses (*Arthavāda Śāstras*). When those are understood, the wise ones are symbolized by *cakorikā*, and the wisdom revelation coming from you and your Lord is to be looked upon as the moonshine of wisdom. Our adoration to you, O Supreme Benevolence.

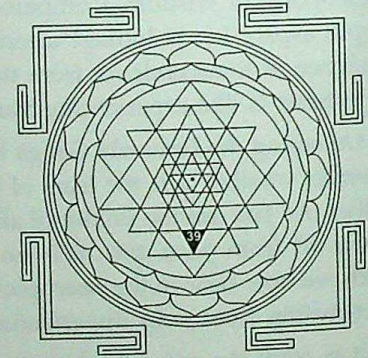
॥ *ḍhaṁ sarvadvandvakṣayamkāri* ॥

Verse Thirty-nine

ṇaṁ sarvasiddhipradā

O Supreme Mother of this world! We hear that our world was a ball of fire with leaping flames for several millennia. Perhaps all the sister planets of Earth were of like nature after the solar catastrophe. How many thousands of years each of these burning cinders of sun had to endure before thick clouds of water enveloped and drained off to cool each heavenly body to its present state! You have chosen Earth not only to cool down but also to become inhabited with life forms. It seems nature copies art. According to poetic versions, your Lord was steadfast in ascetic meditation when the shining ones were conspiring to get a seed of the Supreme God to grow in your blessed womb. With that intention they created a Spring out of season to give environmental encouragement to an irrational stir of erotic passion in the *svādhiṣṭhāna* of the Lord himself.

Your austere meditation and the worship with which you dedicated yourself to the Lord were of no less intensity than that of *Īśvara* himself. It was like the all-generating fire of passion. Even in that moment of romantic expectation, anxiety was growing in the minds of the hosts of heaven about how your Lord would react when Eros struck him with the arrows of flower buds. As expected, your Lord opened his third eye with intense



39. णं सर्वसिद्धिप्रदा

anger and, in his fire of indignation, the god of love was burned to ashes.

Subsequently, after a millennia, when the hour of consummation came, once again fate was not in favor of his seed being laid in your womb. Instead it had to be reverentially protected by fire for thousands of years. When fire became exhausted, the all-cooling water of mother Gaṅgā received the seed for another millennium. Ultimately, when the fire of the all-consuming Lord was too much for Gaṅgā, the heavenly lake, Mānasarovara, received it for a millennium. Then six golden beams that sprang from the seed manifested out of it as six babies, your great fortune. Knowing that the tragedy was averted, you visited the Saravaṇa Lake and saw the babies being fed by the six Kṛttikā stars (Pleiades). In your cool embrace, the son of Śiva became the six-faced Ṣaṇmukha. As he was born of Saravaṇa he came to be known as Saravaṇabhava. As he was fed by the Kṛttikā stars, he was also called Kārttikeya. As he was an aggregate of six separate babies, he came to be known as Skanda. As he is treasured in the cave of the Lord's heart he is called Guha. As he came to be the revaluator of Absolutist wisdom he is known as Subrahmaṇya.

Thus what raged for several millennium as a tragedy that issued forth from the libidinal fire of the creator became a beneficent boon because of your compassionate maneuvering. Although you are always a loyal companion to your annihilating Lord, preserving the essence of each cosmic manifestation so it will pass through the gates of death and destruction to become re-established in another cycle of manifestation, it is by your compassion that we do not retrospectively look back and see how many gates of death and burning fire we have crossed. If we look forward, what else do we see other than the prospect of being consumed by the flames of our imminent cremation?

As a sperm I was sleeping with millions of brother or sister sperms in the testes of my father. Then the fire of erotic passion dislodged us and we were thrown out of our father's scrotum. In that mad hour we took to our heels, seeking refuge in our mother's ovum. Hard to believe that out of millions only I escaped. Behind me I heard the loud cries of all those who were hopefully rushing as fugitives. I was helpless. The door behind me was banged shut. O The mother's ovum! It was verily an oven, such was its heat. I wriggled and became fragmented. But how could I leave my own parts? Holding on to each with all tenacity, I maintained my

collective unity in that hellfire to which came all kinds of terrible chemicals.

Soon I lost my spherical shape — many projections and hollows and appendages grew out of me and I was given this wide mouth. The first function that was assigned to it was to cry as loudly as possible. Thank God you did not give me teeth. Otherwise, like a baby spider, I would have eaten my own mother. Living in the prison house of my mother's womb itself was like graduating in hellfire. Then I came into the second prison of what is called social life. How many kinds of fire are burning there? Hunger, thirst, environmental discomfort, competition, struggle for existence, breeding children to continue the species, facing some emotional upheaval every day.

In spite of these untold flames of fire, O Mother, you are always there to comfort me, to console me, to feed me with delicious food and cradle me to sleep. I am sure you will never leave me. I know I have a million explosives planted in my genitals which can cause the greatest disturbances. But Mother, the *maṇipūra* is an antidote to *svādhiṣṭhāna*. Your intention is to bring me to perfection, as perfect as a pearl of wisdom (*cintāmaṇi*). You are always waiting for me in the *maṇipūra*. I take refuge in your compassion. Accept me, O Mother of perfection. My salutations.

॥ *nam sarvasiddhipradā* ॥

Verse Forty

taṁ sarvasampadpradā

O Mother, the supreme initiator into the spirit, when you are conjoined with your Lord, is the ocean lifting itself to the sun or the sun shining upon the ocean? When a tiny drop of water, seeing the bright sun jobs in the wings of aspiration and rises into the atmosphere as a wisp of vapor, who recognizes this trivial incident which has a cosmic significance? The ascension of one drop initiates the formation of a rain cloud. Hour after hour, day after day, the descending grace of the sun is transforming the ocean into the ascending climb of the cloud. When the sky is overcast with dark clouds, the sun is so completely covered that not a single ray is allowed to thrust its finger through the precipitated darkness to touch the frozen earth. In an hour of darkness one does not suspect the apocalyptic flood of events that

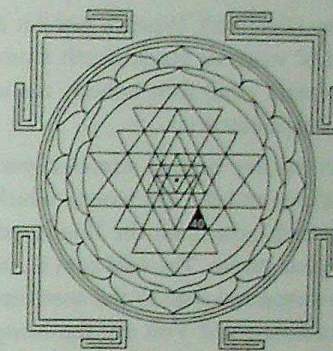
are waiting on the other side of the dark cloud.

A small flash of light, not more visible than the glow of a firefly; lo! It is followed by a streak of lightening, tearing the dark cloud into bits and running from edge to edge with the blinding light of a silver hue. It is followed by a thunderclap as if the god of gods, Indra, has hurled his thunderbolt from above. The earthquakes, heaven breaks into a downpour. It is as if a million Gaṅgās are flowing from Kailāsa all at once. All over the globe, there is a flood that hides all the desert lands and irrigated every garden of the world. The clouds left behind are all silver-crested. The gliding waves are all shining in the bright sun that is not allowed to cascade over the flooding water. It is as if the pearl of perfection in your *maṇipūra* has scattered its rays all over. Both heaven and earth are filled with many a supernova, each one radiating its colorful rays in all directions.

O Mother, when the scorching sun burns up everything on earth, no one guesses that you are gathering the beautifying rain clouds to bring out of the very ashes of your Lord's destruction a fresh surf of life that can once again fill the deep ocean, the earth and the sky with another jubilation of your colorful manifestation. With the union of you and your Lord, nothing more than a throb (*spanda*) was predicted by the poet. Now life is throbbing in abundance. In the sky the stars are twinkling. On earth, flowers by the million are blooming. The bumblebee has to contest with butterflies to find its entry into the petals of freshly-bloomed flowers. The birds also join the festival of spring.

All the brooks, streamlets and rivers have become lively with their gurgling waters joyously flowing towards the ocean. Winds come and fondle the branches of trees. The trees in their turn dance as if taking over the sportive behaviour of you, O Mother, and the Lord, combining *lāsya* and *tāṇḍava*. Many think of the Lord only as the dissolver of the world. Now everyone can witness how he distributes himself as the glowing spirit that is planted in the bosom of every living being.

The oyster is a humble creature, crawling on the bed of the ocean. Within it forms the nucleus of a pearl that slowly grows into a marvel. From out of the depths, the world gets its pearl of immaculate beauty. Even so, in the dark crevice of the flesh of human beings is concealed a tiny spark of Śiva that ultimately grows into the perfection of brilliant



40. तं सर्वसम्पदप्रदा

beauty (*śivajyoti*). When a person attains the power of deliverance, the word of wisdom issues forth from him or her as a pearl of excellence (*cintāmaṇi*). Until then nobody realizes the secret of even the humblest of your manifestations.

In the dry heat of summer, people look in frustration at the blazing sun above and the dry woods which are ready to burst into flames. Then, O Mother, you open the floodgates of the heavens and once again, all sing your praise. The cool rain is received like your delicious breast milk. Who suspected that in the scorching sun there was the blessedness of a nourishing rain? You are the bringer of fortune. In every step of your dance, a fresh joy, a new blessedness is awaiting us. O Mother of benevolence, please initiate us into your deeper and greater secrets. Supreme Adoration.

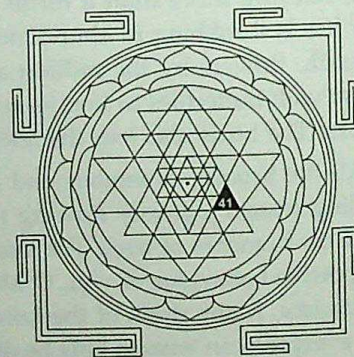
॥ *taṁ sarvasampadpradā* ॥

Verse Forty-one

taṁ sarvapriyamkāri

O Gracious Mother, abundant are your riches. You are described as a serpent with three-and-a-half coils lying hidden in the base foundation. We are told that in the vertical parameter that runs from the tip of the spine to the thousand-petaled lotus at the crown of the head there are three passages for energy — *iḍā*, *piṅgalā* and *suṣumṇā*. Below the heart there are the three synergic centers — *mūlādhāra*, *svādhiṣṭhāna*, and *maṇipūra* — where all the unconscious functions relate the biological to the psychological. These centers are contemplated upon by *yogīs*. Between the two eyes that see we have the psychic control (*ājñā*) which endlessly generates word power. Streams of thought originate from there. When we hear the melody of your enticing *mantras* we experience the sweetness of word meaning and those words' magical power. We remember with pride that we were an integral part of you when you had your watchful eyes on our growing forms that lay as fetuses in your womb.

From the most humble forms of life to the highest, you consider it a personality embellishment to be disturbed by erotic fever, when thoughts, words, and emotional upheavals are all brought in line with the hidden



41. थं सर्वप्रियंकरी

urges that mount from the subliminal depths to your contemplative beatitude. You belong to us here on earth as our immanent reality and we see you there in the heavens as a transcendental monomark. From your sleep in the hidden hollow of the base foundation you stir and suddenly rise like a dancing cobra. We become startled, incapable of deciphering whether the Lord standing firm on the demon of our ego is raising his foot to give his frenzied dance of destruction or you, our beloved Mother, are circumambulating him with your graceful gentle dance.

To regain our comprehension we meditate on the triple *mantras* inscribed on the three lotus petals of your *mūlādhāra*. In your choreography you have included the nine moods for your creatures to be impressed by and to express. Your Lord was considerate to expect from you the three moods of poetic excellence: erotics (*śṛṅgāra*), wonder (*adbhuta*), and compassion (*karuṇa*). In your creative art these three moods enhance the beauty of your creation. When it is time to dance with your Lord and do away with creation, you bring in the moods of terror, valor, and fear (*raudra*, *vīra*, and *bhayānaka*).

When the serpent of *kuṇḍalinī* awakens, what happens? The Self rejoices and revels in its own blissful nature. In that hour of rejoicing your Lord manifests as Ānandabhairava. When his dance reaches the climax of its drama, the fire of dissolution swallows up all traces of the past, the presentative world of here and now, and even the promise of a tomorrow. Ultimately when everything is reduced to the ashes of aloneness (*kaivalya*), out of the ashes you bring forth a new age and a new manifestation which have in them every detail of whatever is lived now. Every morning you bring forth a new sun of crimson beauty. When the veil of night is lifted, millions of fresh flowers in lotus ponds unfold their petals to greet the rising sun. Every month you give your alternating gifts of a full moon and a new moon. The death you bring is not a period. It is only a semicolon to point your finger to another meaning. Your conclusion marks an introduction.

You and your Lord have no special identity. You roam around as the male buffalo and the female buffalo and as the male sparrow and the female sparrow. He heralds the rising sun as a cock. As a hen you look on, rejoicing in the egg you will soon present. He is the lord of your breath (*prāṇanātha*). You are his life breath (*prāṇeśvarī*). Thus you have

made every species as pairs of generators and generatresses (*janakas* and *jananīs*). You become formal when you assume iconographic images or specify yourself in the biological world with morphological designs. In the world of lines and angles, you assume geometrical forms. In the world of secret similes, you become algebraic notations.

When you move from one location to another, I relate to your vibration, meditating upon you as the innumerable centers of this world. With unpredictable motions, you fill the universe with the figures of all possible constellations. I meditate on your universal gestalt by relating it to the central locus of my focusing consciousness. When the entire figure is woven into a tapestry, I learn from it the orchestration of the choir of the spheres reverberating both in the sky and here on earth. Even when your figure covers the three worlds, I know you are not more than a mathematical point with a shifting locus and no other dimension. Such is the meditation I offer each day to your secret symbol, *Śrīcakra*. O Mother, admit me into the unspoken secret of the unutterable, the invisible and the unimaginable. In full assurance let me conclude, "This is it, this is it."

॥ *thaṁ sarvapriyāṁkāṛī* ॥

Verse Forty-two

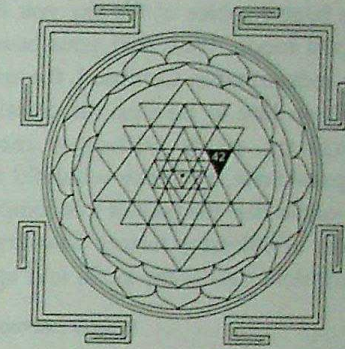
daṁ sarvamaṅgalakāriṇī

O Mother, bestower of auspiciousness, by your direction, the One becomes many and each one is assigned an appropriate function. Although there is only one sun, *Āditya*, each month he is known by a different name and bracketed into a different constellation. The benevolence the sun brings each month is distinctly different from that of other months. Aries marks the beginning of all creative activities on earth. The sun at its beginning is looked upon as the architect of the world, *Viśvakarmā*. In this respect the sun looks in all directions and conceives a hierarchical scheme of creative action. The world is called *loka* because of the sun's comprehensive vision, *avalokanam*. Thereafter the sun enters into deep thought. He is said to be seated in the lotus that has come from the navel of *Viṣṇu*. *Brahmā* the Creator, as *Viśvakarmā*, has four faces which look towards the east, the south, the west, and the north.

Seeing rain clouds gathering in the sky, the farmer prepares his field and brings seeds out of his granaries to be sown. The sun changes its status in Taurus and is called Pūṣan, one who nourishes everything. Seeds sown in the earth burst open. Sprouts of new plants come up. The fire of the sun and the water of the rain join in a benevolent creative process. Pūṣan is also called the bright (Kāntimān) and is considered to be the younger brother of Sūrya. This aspect of the sun has the power to make everything enchanting. Thus *māyā* becomes intimately connected with Pūṣā. That is why adolescence and early youth are considered charming. The rainy season enters into its final stage in Gemini. Now the sun is called Parjanya. It is as if the sun wants to fill up all the reservoirs for the rest of the year. Heavy rains mark the end of Gemini. This is followed by Cancer. Trees are overlaid with fruits and nuts. Wheat, rice, and corn get ready to be harvested. Now the sun presides over Cancer as Amśuman.

Then comes Leo that is so rich that granaries are again full. Like the Greek god Apollo, Āditya becomes the most gracious and glorious of all gods, called Bhagavān. He has godliness (*iśitva*), virtues (*dharma*), reputation (*kīrti*), grace (*aiśvarya*), wisdom (*jñāna*) and the qualities of renunciation or sacrifice (*tyāga*). When Leo changes into Virgo, once again the sun becomes a creator. As the cosmic carpenter he is Dvaṣṭṛ. He has three distinct features, Ṛbhu, Viśvarūpa and Savitā. When he comes as Savitā he is propitiated with the chanting of Gāyatrī. Virgo gives its place to Libra. When Libra comes Viṣṇu himself presides in the sun as the god of equity. When Libra changes into Scorpio, the sun is called Vivasvan, the one from whom the world physicians, the Aśvins, have come. Scorpio is exchanged for Sagittarius. Then the sun is called Aryamā, the bringer of wisdom and fulfillment. When Sagittarius moves away, Capricorn comes. The sun that presides over Capricorn is Mitra, the friend of all living beings who is earnest in bringing benevolence to everyone. He prepares everyone for the Aquarian life. When Aquarius comes, the sun is newly designated as Yama. He brings a pause, a kind of moratorium, so everyone can be impregnated with an ideal for tomorrow. Death marks the rebirth. If Aquarius is symbolized by a pot containing a sperm, Pisces is symbolized by a fish swimming in the boundless ocean. Then the sun becomes Varuṇa, the bestower of blessings.

O Mother, your crown is decorated with these twelve shining aspects of the sun. You share this radiance of light with your children. Above



42. दं सर्वमङ्गलकारिणी

these twelve rubies of the sky you have another decoration, the sublime crescent moon. With that your beauty comes to its climax. It becomes truly indescribable. Confused, the artist lays aside his brush. The sculptor does not dare to take up his chisel. Not finding adequate similes and metaphors, poets withdraw into meditation. You are certainly compassionate. You may withhold many more of your decorations. It is no wonder that the poet of this composition decided to call the maddening ecstasy of billowing beauty *Saundaryalaharī*. Words and mind recoil from descriptions and come again and again to prostrate at your lotus feet.

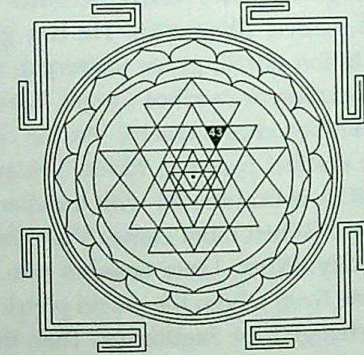
॥ *dam sarvamaṅgalakāriṇī* ॥

Verse Forty-three

dham sarvakāmapradā

O sportive Mother, you are well known as the rejoicer in your *līlā*. We do not understand why you make darkness so attractive. When the world is wrapped in the dark veils of night, you bring out the twinkling stars to make the contrast of the dark even more appealing. When you cradle us into sleep we forget the glory of daylight and the certitude of wisdom we have been seeking at the feet of masters. When we become sympathetically affected by the dark tresses of your abundant curly hair, we are delighted to go into the inertial states of deeper and deeper sleep. Then our only joy is reveling in hallucinatory dreams. We know that such dreams will take us only to the detestable darkness of desire (Bhadrakālī). When, from the audible, we go into silence, and from the visible, we go into deep sleep, nothing crosses our minds. It is true there is neither joy nor pain there. Does that bring realization to us? It is doubtful. Lethargy, laziness and sleep take over our minds and for the time being we feel relieved of all our duties of life. Even the catatonia of a depression is accepted as a state of absorption. When we are bound by desires and attachment, we think of it as a blessed state of being relieved from the responsibilities of life. When we are incapable of accomplishing anything, we mistake it for a state of beatitude.

You have in your tresses a sacred fragrance which is even envied by the celestial damsels. It is true that in a few cases the fragrance of earth



43. धं सर्वकामप्रदा

can be praised as sacred. But from Indra's paradise deluding fragrances waft into our sensory systems. We go from doom to doom. You have given us these ears to listen to auspicious words of wisdom. We in our weakness rejoice in voices that exhilarate our mean passions. Instead of paying heed to the golden truth of wisdom, we listen to gossip and add our own babble to it.

You gave us these eyes to see the ennobling forms of sublime beauty. Forgetting the purpose for which you gave us eyes, we look for erotic models and relish the passions of an infatuated person. You gave us sensibility of touch, expecting us to discern the presence of the supreme. Instead we like to be fondled and tickled by the base and the unclean. In the same organ where there are taste buds to relish sweetness you also invested that rare ability to articulate musical melody and the sacred praises of the supreme. But we have become gluttonous and our tastes are of the gross and the vulgar.

What we aspire for is not to be seduced by the fragrance of a hedonistic heaven but the austere sublimity of the fragrance of your compassion. We know we are taken from one cycle of life to another by the essence of our past actions, *vāsanā*. It is not in our interest to nourish our quest for worldly pleasures. We are like ignorant children. We cannot distinguish between right and wrong.

Instead of granting our favors of what we like, O Mother, lead us to the right discrimination. Grant us only what is desirable (*hitam*). O Mother, lead us from darkness to light, untruth to truth and from death to immortality. This is our only prayer.

॥ dham sarvakāmapradā ॥

Verse Forty-four

nam sarvaduḥkhavimocanī

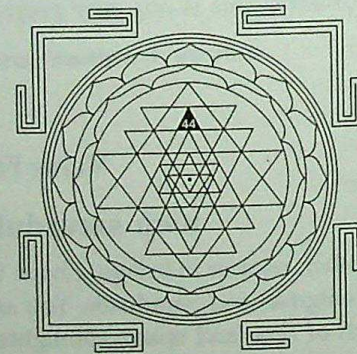
O Mother, rejoicer in bringing hope to us. It seems the Absolute is riddled with enigmas and paradoxes. You and your Lord have chosen an infinite stretch of time and space, spotlighted with a here and now, for dancing your gentle creative *lāsya* and your Lord's frenzied, traumatic dance of

destruction *tāṇḍava*. The extension of your creation is boundless and the span of our vision is so limited. We do not see anything beyond the frontiers of the horizon or what is concealed from us by the blue canopy of the sky.

The present is never longer than the wink of an eye. The veil of the past is drawn over every moment that passes, and we can recapture what we have once lived only if our faculty of memory saves an impression that can be recalled as a fragmentary essence. You have put a thick fog in the gateway of time and therefore what is concealed in the future cannot be seen even by the keen eye of a prophet who claims to have a transparency of vision. Your alternating fixations of day and night cancel out each other and leave us with a mind from which both the transactional and transpersonal are erased after the day is done and the night is over.

Of course, we are grateful that you are not burdening us with the recollections of our painful encounters. However, our status is that of the ever-ignorant. For you, our beautiful Mother, the dark tresses of your hair only enhance your charm. Darkness is not always the coveted charm for us because it makes our minds so opaque and our understanding so muddled. Who knows for what length of time we were in the stream of life's manifestation until at last we evolved into ovums in our mother's ovaries and somnambulist sperms that found temporary shelter residence in the testes of our incumbent fathers? Poets speak of the imprisoned splendor. I know I was imprisoned within the dark confines of a womb. In spite of the potential seed of gnosis, I had no knowledge whatsoever of how I was taken care of in the dingy and painful biological workshop of child manufacturing. Thus life begins in darkness.

In this vast universe of darkness you have put only a few luminary bubbles. So you are much in the dark as I am. How can I ever complain of my faint vision and muddled understanding? After receiving responsibility with my ego consciousness as a knower, doer, and enjoyer (or rather sufferer), I got into the tunnel of grooming. I had to pass through rigorous disciplines imposed on me and spend my childhood, adolescence and early youth in servility to pick up the tools of learning. After graduating from academies of learning, we human beings still remain basically ignorant, even of the functions of our own bodies. Even an octogenarian or centenarian has little knowledge about why and how his heart beats, not to mention how his kidney or pancreas works.



44. नं सर्वदुःखविमोचनी

When the night is dark, if I am dead asleep, I don't care how long I have been sleeping or when I will wake up. But when sleep is disturbed and insomnia makes me mad, I crave for the light of the sun. When I finally see a crimson glow in the east, I am gladdened. Even so, my Mother, when I see the crimson streak in the part of your hair, where you have proudly marked your dedication to your husband, I become hopeful. It is such a simple, almost inconspicuous symbol. But for us, your children, even the slightest hint of your presence fills us with hope that your compassionate glance will turn in our direction and you will pick up each one of us to rest in your lap, our seat of fearlessness.

In a world which very often drives us to our wits end when we see only frustration before us, O Mother, nothing sustains other than the hope that you have planted even in our darkest dreams. Hope is only where there is a possibility. The faith in the possibility is implanted in us by the regularity with which you recycle your days and recreate this universe day after night and creation after dissolution. With heartfelt gratitude we thank you, Mother, for sustaining our hope. Let there be tomorrows and the happy return of this day again and again. *Aum.*

॥ nam sarvaduḥkhavimocanī ॥

Verse Forty-five

paṁ sarvamṛtyupraśamaṁ

O Mother, adorable excellence of beauty. Knowledgeable seers describe your Lord as truth, the serenity of beatitude, and beauty (*satyam, śivam, sundaram*). Is beauty added to Śiva as an ultimate dimension because of your inseparability from him? Philosophers are searching for the most dependable norm of truth. Contemplative mystics are disciplining themselves to lose themselves in beatitude. But nothing gladdens the entire world more than a vision of beauty. Does it not mean that truth and beatitude are implied in beauty?

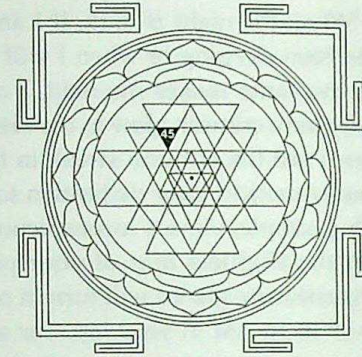
One thing is clear. Truth is rivaled by untruth and beatitude is disturbed by the slightest dissonance which can cause a cosmic disorder. Maybe because of these conditional factors residing in beauty, many illusions are covered up with the façade of the pretty to look at. It is not

unlikely that the sensuously disturbed may become intrigued to write a poem eulogizing beauty or to take up a brush to dabble in colors, mistaking themselves to be creating beautiful artifacts. O Mother, have you set any dependable criterion for understanding and evaluating beauty that can give us lasting deliverance from the snares of illusion? Maybe you yourself represent to us the definition we are seeking.

You have made flowers universally adorable. In your choice of colors for the petals, you have lavishly used every color of the rainbow. Probably because you have been painting leaves, fields, and lawns with green, you have chosen other colors for your flowers. Even in the most remote and hidden forests you are careful to give your full attention to bring forth flowers of all kinds, designs and colors. Certainly they were not meant to be seen by we human beings who conceitedly think that you created everything for our enjoyment. To you the little winged buds, the bees, the butterflies and the hummingbirds are the rightful heirs to enjoy the creation of beautiful flowers. Some imaginative people know that we humans are unworthy to fondle flowers. That is why they have invented fairies to dance on the soft petals in the day time and sleep in floral beds at night. Perhaps we get the first idea of beauty by looking at your flowers.

We know you have a secret with which you smile at us. The crimson sky, the golden rays of the sun, colorful flowers in the garden, neatly illuminated wings of butterflies and birds, and shimmering stars are all telling us that beauty has something to do with brightness. We know that you love everyone and everything very dearly. But certainly you were not very clever to conceal your preference for the red and the golden. We thank you, Mother, that you did not make the heavenly bodies triangular or cubical. You preferred to make them spherical. How ugly we would all have been if you had made us like bamboo poles! Instead you decided that sinuous curves make the most beautiful of appearances. Is it because you are female that you erred on the side of exaggerating it in women?

Certainly the bee and the butterfly are both great lovers of flowers. But the ancient poets gave their preference to the bumblebee because that fits with your emphasis on beauty as being circular and spherical. Females cannot get bumblebees to sit around their faces, so they manipulate their hair to make it as curly as possible. You don't have to go to a beautician to get dark curls for your Lord to fondle. He does not



45. पं सर्वमृत्युप्रशमनी

mind when the southern breeze comes and disturbs your curls. Perhaps he appreciates the display.

In the heart of the dark sky, you present the golden disk of the sun. And how beautifully you contrast the full face of the silver moon with the night sky. From this we learn another lesson: that contrast is a must in the creation of beauty. Another criterion of beauty is the purity on which you make an uncompromising emphasis. Perhaps you have given the highest mark of excellence to the lotus flower which is born out of mud and filth (*pañkaja*) because that humble plant knows the secret of transcendence. The lotus lives in the water but it never allows even its leaf to be wet with the water on which it floats. Great seers look at it and marvel. They expect a wise person to be like that, to live in the world and yet not belong to the world.

When you make the flowers you probably wanted us to learn some of their hidden secrets. You gave an invisible fragrance to their petals. Even when we do not see a jasmine or rose or magnolia, we can detect their presence by their distinct smell. Two men may look alike but they have different fragrance in their characters. Who can excel you in the art of creation when you mark the negativity of the fragrance with stench? How can a poet put fragrance in his words or an artist put fragrance in his painting? Somehow they do it. It is the hidden fragrance of style that distinguishes a master from an undisciplined practitioner. That is not all you have to say about the beauty of a flower. The color can be seen, the fragrance can be smelled. You have also invested in the flower something even more precious, the sweet honey which is kept hidden. Only the true lover of the flower knows how to tickle a flower and get its honey. O Mother, what engineering skill you have shown in giving special wings to the hummingbird to keep balancing over the flower until it can suck out all its honey. You are certainly to be admired for the special beak you have provided that beautiful being which can be inserted without causing the least hurt to the flower's delicate petals.

Can we find a master of aesthetics more profound than you in all the three worlds to share with us the secret of beauty? All these humble creatures make us also thirsty for the honey of beauty which you have hidden in the core of the beloved. For that you give us a key. Our own dark eyes almost resemble your bumblebees. Our eyes do not leave their

sockets but their fluttering glances can reach the beautiful eyes of our counterparts. In the interlocking glance we have the key to unravel the beauty of a loving mind. Timid ones will walk with their eyes cast low and their cheeks blushing crimson, but once their souls are touched, they will also be eager to look back. Then, like the lightning which cannot be hidden for long behind a dark cloud, a faint smile appears. The floodgate of beauty is about to open. The lover sees the sparkling glint of light coming from the jasmine bud of teeth. No word is needed. No promise is to be made. Between a sense of awe and a delightful thrill of wonder, a subdued smile proclaims the true feeling of the heart. The beauty of union is still untapped.

How cleverly you teach us the secret of beauty without any verbosity or class notes. You place before us a simple flower, a lotus, and you make a bumblebee crawl in it. Then you show how it flutters its wings in ecstasy. So simple as that! The poet may write a whole page, running into a million verses. Yet he is dissatisfied after writing the last line and marking it with a period. Has the world ever seen an artist turning away from his painting with a heart leaping with joyous satisfaction? Never. Can a musician honestly come to the finale and go to sleep with a tranquil mind? O Mother, there is no one even dreaming of excelling you.

Only a poet of inferior breed could suspect that you are jealous of the beauty of your creation. You are proud even of the spherical polish on a mustard seed and of the little dots you have painted on the wings of ladybugs. Probably a Zen master or Taoist can appreciate you best because the highest water mark of beauty is the spontaneous simplicity you put into everything. To this day the world has not learned how to make a blade of grass or an all-mirroring dewdrop. Is it any wonder, our dear Mother, that you have elicited from your Lord all the great secrets of the science of the Absolute by simply overwhelming him with the most gentle of your smiles? Adorations to you.

॥ paṁ sarvaṁṛtyupraśamaṁ ॥

Verse Forty-six

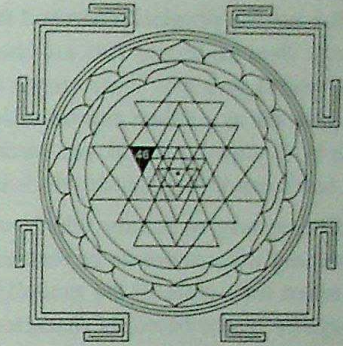
pham sarvavighnanivāriṇī

Omnipresent Mother, lovers of *Śiva* and *Śakti* seek you in the caves of their hearts. Irrespective of the pluralities of bodies, *Śiva* resides in everyone. In the energy that enables every animated creature to move their limbs or even to breathe, you are there. Your Lord is called Kalādhara because he is decorated by the crescent moon. It is a paradox that *Śiva* sits on earth and his matted hair is decorated by the crescent moon. He is not wholly himself; you are also present in him. Your forehead is resplendent like a half moon. This is suggestive of the immanent principle of the Divine being complemented by the transcendent.

As the third eye of the Lord is the burner of the three cities, the world is afraid of it. It is normally expected to be in the Lord's forehead. When we see the cool sheen of the moon in your forehead instead of the burning fire of the third eye, it is both paradoxical and comforting. For you, sun and moon are the altering states of consciousness. In daytime you keep all your creatures engaged in the activities which naturally ensue from their *svadharma*. At night when dream time comes, you preside in the minds of all and give a lyrical quality to their thoughts and dreams.

In the *Śiva-Śakti* concept many paradoxes can be seen. Each one brings to us a deep lesson to harmonize our lives so that we become worthy devotees of *Śiva* and *Śakti* who are the perfect models of truth, beatitude and beauty. The favorite haunt of your Lord is the charnel field where he can be seen smeared with the ashes of cremated bodies and dancing as *Ānandabhairava*. He induces fear in all onlookers. To alleviate such a tragedy you are always beside him as *Ānandabhairavi*, dancing your *lāsya*. On seeing you people feel relieved. Lovers seek the cool and gentle beams of a half moon. Here there is no difference between the moon and your forehead. Your forehead and your thoughts of loving care are the same.

There is a secret implied both in the dancing *Śiva* symbol and you, our moon-faced Mother. *Śiva* dances beyond life and death. He is attired in the transparency of the substanceless sky. He is Digambara. At the same time, under his firm foot he is pressing the demon of hysteria, *Apasmāra*, down to earth. At the alpha point we are all crude and confused like the demon. The Lord helps us to sublimate and transform our ontologic



46. फं सर्वविघ्ननिवारिणी

present into a teleologic future. His own crescent is an indication of the moon waxing into fullness. Its frailty and sublimity is also contrasted to the crude demon.

It is not the physical moon and the physical light that you are bringing to your dear children. You are the daughter of a mountain. However earthbound you are, your crown is above the clouds and your lofty thoughts are as sublime and beautiful as that of a resplendent half moon. Thus both your Lord and you teach us to rise above our earthly nature and reach out to the *ānanda* which is beyond the height of manifestation.

The ecstasy of beauty which we derive from your sublimity is not something that excites us or enthralls us. It is a cool serenity like lovers get when they walk in the moonlight. This gentle gesture of yours will always be remembered as characteristic of your compassion and loving care. Our obeisance to you.

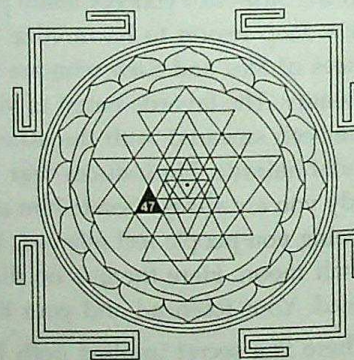
॥ *pham sarvavighnanivariṇī* ॥

Verse Forty-seven

baṁ sarvāṅgasundarī

O Mother of disarming beauty, the sun is said to be the eye of the world and the eye is said to be the sun of the soul. In all your creations you have made a reciprocal bipolarity between the seer and the seen, the subject and the object. In the act of seeing, the shaft of attention is shot from the eye as from a bow to every visible point in the object that is seen. It is the attentiveness of the bowman that marks the accuracy of the arrow he shoots. The bow and arrow are relevant in the context of defense. As the Supreme Mother of the world you are mindful of the welfare of all, from the most negligible bug to an enormous galaxy. The span of your vision is unlimited. Poets look at your two brows as the two halves of a bow held in position to shoot. Your quick glances that go from right to left create a fantasy of a line of bumble bees that can easily be taken for the bowstring.

For a careful artist, no detail is unimportant. You are not only a creator of the animate and inanimate but you are also a grand architect of beauty. As such, you can rightly be looked upon as an archetypal artist who sets a



47. वं सर्वाङ्गसुन्दरी

model for the creation of beauty in every form. That is why you have given so much care to each limb of the beautiful. Take for instance the beauty of your vigilant eye. Suppose an artist paints a portrait and does not draw or paint in it the life-giving eye. Will anybody appreciate such a portrait which will be easily passed for a dead man's inanimate face? What a difference it makes when a highlight is marked right in the dark pupil of the eye. You have the same archetypal model for creating the heavenly luminaries and the eye that sees them. That care is shown even to the eye of an ant, not to say of a gazelle or an innocent child.

Each eye has a mystical depth, a heavenly lake in which one can see dreams diving and surfacing like fish in a clear pond. A look from an eye can be so compassionate that it can make a timid person fearless and an intimidated person courageous. The speech of a person is considered to be the most winsome method to capture another's soul. However, the eloquence of tongue can never compete with the stunning steady look of a lover's gaze.

There are great teachers who say "love your enemy". In fact, you have no enemies. You make everyone docile, friendly and even a captive or slave by letting the world know exactly how you see the world and what you expect of each person. There is an old proverb which says, "how you see, so you create" (*yathā dṛṣṭi tathā sṛṣṭi*). In the world of hatred and fear the lion meets its rival with its mighty fist and sharp claws. It grins and it shows its sharp teeth. The buffalo meets its rival with its heavy and steel-like horns. But when the same lion comes to his spouse, his paws are soft and his eyes are tender like morning flowers. He licks his mate with affection. Thus in the world there is a weapon for hatred and there is a more sure device for love.

Sometimes you are worshipped as Mahiṣāsūramardinī, the vanquisher of the buffalo demon. Hardly anyone knows the secret weapon with which you vanquish. In fact, we are all born as brutes. We become stubborn in our tantrums. You are in every mother and you know how to tackle a brute. With your loving look you disarm us, you fondle us. Laying us in our cradles, you sing us lullabies. The buffalo in us is lulled to sleep. When night after night you expose us to your compassion, the demon in us is transformed into a loving angel. O Mother, that is how you vanquish, not by beating on the buffalo demon with a cudgel. You are the greatest

tamer in the world. We see this magic in the circus arena when a seventeen year old girl comes and bewitches a lion or tiger to follow her like a pet dog. She even dares to put her pretty head into the mouth of the ferocious animal only to be licked or kissed.

It is no wonder you have handed over to the god of love flower buds and not poisoned arrowheads to shoot at the romantic hearts of people. It is with that intention that you fashioned all flower buds like arrows? If only we could learn from you how you set up your defense without the slightest blemish of offense included in it, we could live a life of absolute peace on earth. Your Lord destroys the world. After a pause, you restore it. He burns the god of love into ashes. With a smile you restore him to dance in the lover's heart.

Teach us Mother, to win the world with a winsome smile and capture the world in the noose of a loveful look. We give ourselves entirely to you because we believe that only he lives who loves.

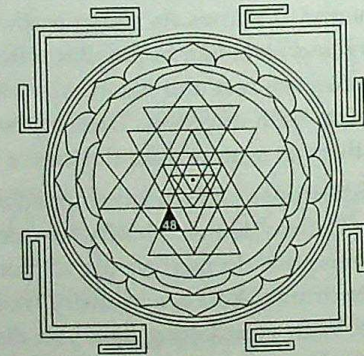
॥ bhaṁ sarvāṅgasundarī ॥

Verse Forty-eight

bhaṁ sarvasaubhāgyadāyini

O Mother, you are our true fortune. What we have lived and transformed into our disciplined talents, well-groomed knowledge and cultivated wisdom is like your thoughtful guidance walking before us. Nothing is more fortunate than having wisdom itself as our guide. We enjoy our immediate present which is like listening to the poetic enthrallment of one who has mined the deep serenity of the soul. If our past is like living with your sun, the present is like living with your moon. Both the past and the present are finally to be fulfilled with the future. The future is not an outside factor but is like a fire that is kindled within. You are that unlit lamp which is ever burning in us, supplying us with the will to live, the path to tread and the light that shows us the way and the goal.

Thus as the sun, moon and fire you have become our thrice blessed fortune. You have taken full care of us. Our past was blessed. The present is blessed. And the future will be a blessing forever. Your right eye



48. भं सर्वसौभाग्यदायिनी

symbolizes the sun. Your left eye symbolizes the moon. The middle eye symbolizes the wisdom fire which is leading us ever to carry out your will. The sun and the moon represent day and night. What you intend us to create in the day is to be scrutinized empirically in the light of the sun, employing all our five senses. You expect us to perform all our actions with the dexterity of our hands guided by the minute details we see with our eyes. Every instruction passed on by the experienced elders is to be listened to carefully, and we should guide our steps unerringly in the path that is free of evil and which was tread by the masters who have forged our culture. Whatever is accomplished in one day will be preserved for the next day. You help us to accomplish our works and to carry out our desirable ambitions (*kāmya karma*).

Before the day commences and where the day ends, night is conjoined to the day with two very special kinds of twilight: the dawn to begin the day and the dusk to close it. At dawn you initiate us into each day's working program. Without such an assignment life on earth would be meaningless and a frustration. After the day's work, when we come to dusk, the sun slowly disappears in the west. This second twilight brings an atmosphere of peace and serenity. A cool breeze fondles us and brings us into our own dear self. All thoughts are gathered into us. The mind comes to sit in meditation at the altar of the soul. We get into a prayerful mood.

We know that like a child going to sleep in the loving care of the mother, we will be with you all through the night. Your fairy tales come to us like dreams of moonlight. The rigors of the day are no longer there. You are not a task master when the moon presides. There are no debts to be paid. There are no obligations to be filled. There is no contract with anyone. Life becomes light for us, as light as the moon that shines upon us. If we do not fall asleep, the muses are there to play with us. We can have music. Moonlit nights have a lyrical quality. Like playful fairies we can hold the hands of our friends or lovers and dance out in the open. Like children we can treat the whole world like a doll to play with. Finally, the second twilight leads us to the silence of the soul and even helps us to transcend all dualities, leaving behind both the subjective ego and its problems of possession. Forgetting everything, with no differentiation of you and I or anyone, we can go into deep sleep until the cock crows again. When we sleep, you make good use of our silence to replenish our

bodies and restore the energy of our minds. Again when the sun rises, you call us back to our routines with strong and healthy bodies and the resolve to carry out your bidding with courage and enthusiasm.

Thus our past, present and future are fully taken care of. The sunny days, moonlit nights and peaceful twilights come cyclically and, through alternation, refresh our consciousness and make our lives always new. There is always a fresh value to live and a new wonder to reflect on. Your will be done. Please help us to identify our will with yours so without conflict we can say, "our will be done."

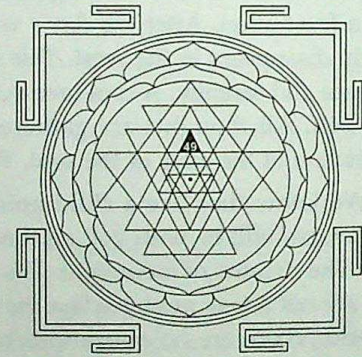
॥ bhaṁ sarvasaubhāgyadāyini ॥

Verse Forty-nine

aum

O Mother, in the here and now you have assigned each one of us a firm ground to stand on, a field of operation to work in and a goal to accomplish. Each person is given a separate identity with a unique form and a special name. Like a teacher, you look into our eyes with expectation, wanting us to carry out our instructions meticulously. We see in our eyes our guiding star. In that respect, you are our revealer. To us you are like a ready reckoner. We do not want to go wrong so we look into your eyes. When you nod your assent we proceed. If we sense our disapproval we correct ourselves. In this world of our transactional operations you are our task master. We know that you expect expediency and perfection from us. We become established in unitive action only when we function as your co-creators. For that purpose we follow your footsteps with absolute sincerity. You have spotted the goal for us. Your eyes are where your heart is. Your heart is where your treasure is. Your treasure is where our accomplishments are. So we look into your eyes to know exactly what you expect us to become.

When you move with us from the transactional wakeful life into the wonder garden of dreams you take away our empirical eyes. Instead you give us the eyes of a poet, an architect or an artist. You give us a special ear for music. In our nimble feet you put rhythmic steps to dance. You even align our heart beats with the percussional music of the choir of the heavens.



49. ॐ

With your magic wand you call the moon and stars to watch from the heavens how you revel with your children.

The most beautiful thing in that world is that nobody makes any mistakes. To you everything is a creation of art. That is what mothers think when their toddlers splash colors on the walls and pull the house to pieces. Where do we get such freedom, Mother, except in your compassionate vision of matchless love? You do not allow us to become fully depleted of energy. Before that you spread your meditation mat in the little shrine of our souls. When you sit there and go into your trance of beatitude, we go into deep sleep. For you this is a recurring program. Is there any mother in the world who does not put her child to sleep before she retires? You do the same for us.

You are also an early riser, preparing the dawn before your children wake up. All the flowers have to bloom before the sun rises. The birds are to be roused to sing morning's glory and gentle breezes deputed to every garden. You send your emissaries to the bee hives so that they may not miss where you have kept honey for them. You do not want your winged fairies, the butterflies, to lose the game in their competition with the bumblebees. Just as a mother cares for the tiniest of her children, you send your thoughts to rouse the hummingbirds. The mist knows what is expected of it. It wafts into the garden and gently places a pearl-like dewdrop on every blade of grass. Then you brief the morning sun to bless each dew drop with a golden beam. O mother, how much you care to beautify the world for us. What a contrast the twilight of the dusk makes to the twilight of the dawn. You are envisioning another kind of beauty when the sun is silently submerging amidst the gold-crested waves of the ocean and clouds carry the radiance of the second twilight all the way from the western sky to the orient sky. Even the best of artists are not so color conscious as the sky and its clouds.

Just as you make each person unique and universal, you make the world especially blessed with different habitations of people where civilization flourishes. Like every forest has its own dignity and personality, you give each city its own triumph. Extensive cities are looked upon as a high achievement of humanity. There you are seen as a goddess of extensive vision, Viśālākṣī. When a city becomes prosperous it assumes dignity. Like an irresistible magnet, it draws people from every corner of

the world because they see prosperity there. They think of that city as specially graced by you. It becomes a place worthy of being remembered as one wakes up. You are remembered as the auspicious one who presides over such a city. There you are worshiped as Kalyāṇī, the auspicious one. Most people seek protection and security. They want to be in a place where people mutually care for one another and trust their neighbors. Such a city is called Ayodhyā. O Mother, where you are, that is Ayodhyā. A good city always has a continuous flow of people coming to share its wonders and from that city people go to various other places. Thus there are continuous concourses. Such a city is admired as Dharā. There are cities which are like the Mecca of culture. Wise people, great artists, temples of music and seats of wisdom are all there and people speak of them with sweetness. Those cities are Madhuras. Pleasure-loving people look for distractions in a city. They need entertainment and night clubs, interesting places to eat and drink. For them, you provide Bhogavatīs. Then there are sacred cities where people go as pilgrims seeking nearness to God and redemption from sins. You are there to bless your most loving children. Those cities are called Avantī.

O victorious Mother, such is the distribution of cities you have made to every nation of the world. Where your banner of victory flies, that is the city of Vijayā. You are so mysterious. To seek you, we can go anywhere and, at the same time, we don't have to go anywhere. Every distraction you give us is also an attraction that fetches us to your heart. All adorations to you.

॥ aum ॥

Verse Fifty

śrīm

O Mother, bestower of grace. In an archway you place the keystone vertically at the center and the supporting stones or bricks are placed first at the horizontal alpha, then one upon the other, each slightly tilted until they make a perfect arch. When you make a garland or necklace of pearls you place the pendant in the middle. All the other beads are to enhance the beauty of the central gem. Altogether the garland looks excellent because each pearl or precious stone complements the magnificence of the other.

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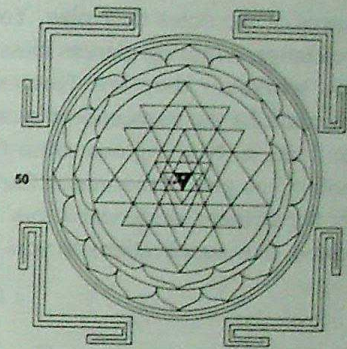
In a banquet, the king or president is seated on the throne or central chair, where he is surrounded by all the other dignitaries. The king or president represents sovereign value and sovereignty goes to him with the consent of all the others. In the solar system you have given a central place to the sun and the planets are orbiting around it. Between a person's brows you mark the one eye that is the light of the soul. On either side of it are the eyes for phenomenal vision, accompanied by all the other senses.

In the world of rejoicing, the silent contemplative sits totally absorbed in you while others sing and dance. You expect the wise person to see the one Divine in all and be absolutely free without possession and without desire. But you expect all others to remain in their assigned positions, dutifully carrying out all their responsibilities. In the world of aesthetics you show the highest beauty to the seer of the *mantra* who transcends the pleasures of the senses. And yet you are generous to give in the sensual world elaborate sciences of creation in the fields of music, and art and architecture.

Thus you have many varieties of dialectical interplay between the one and the many. In one sense, where we choose the one, the many are to be rejected. Where we choose to be with the many, the one is unattainable. A certain amount of regret is inevitable in the discipline you enjoin on us. In the world of ontological rejoicing, the other is as real as you are. The singer has her audience and the expositor has his spectators. A couple can hold their hands together and dance to the tune of the spheres.

There is a thin line that always separates the relative from the Absolute. Like the swarms of bees that cluster around honey-oozing flowers, those who have an eye for the pleasures of the world crowd in the marketplace. You do not denounce them. You give them their pleasure in commerce. Many are the consumer goods that are produced and exchanged. But in the silent splendor of the sanctum nothing is sold and nothing is bought. The rare person who enters the sanctum expects nothing but the peace that surpasses all other values.

In you we can see the epitome of the entire universe of values. As a connoisseur of all beauties, all arts and all crafts, you sit there telling the beads of the rosary of letters and melodiously playing on the strings of your *vīṇā*. You are always surrounded by poets of high imagination, artists of exquisite talents, and musicians who have gone into the most subtle



50. श्री

nuances of the notes they play. You lend them all your attention. Your appreciative, admiring glances bless everyone on your right, left or in the front, wherever they are. However, you never give up your secret admiration for the transcendent because your wisdom eye is always where your Lord is. Nothing can cause the slightest distraction in the steady attention you give to the omega. Such is the secret of your grace. O Mother, only the initiated understand this. Only you know who is worthy to be initiated. Our supplications to you.

॥ śrīṃ ॥

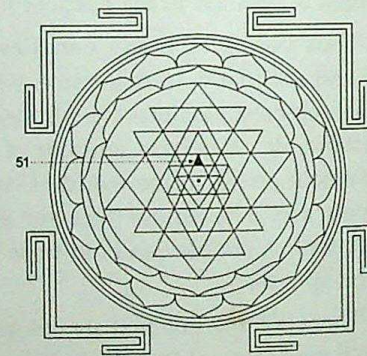
Verse Fifty-one

aim

O Mother, manipulator of the drama of life. To understand the concealed secret of the grand performance of your world drama, one should know its three stages: concept, role assignment, and ultimate effect on the participants. Your conceptual world is the inception of the germinal dynamics by which you elaborate a cosmic performance from a mathematical point (*bindu*) to a multifaceted dimension which is spatially and temporally coextensive with the grand universe; this is the theater where the drama of life is being performed (*kalā*). Like the two cotyledons that share the nourishment of a sprouting seed, the first stir or pulsation takes place between you and your Lord. That is praised as the union of the spirit and procreative nature (*Śiva-Śakti yoga*). This marks the opening scene of the drama of life. It is described in all ancient scriptures as a desire to create or manifest.

The second stage is the proliferation of the agents of performance. In a theater this happens through the assignment of roles to actors and actresses. Each one is instructed to adhere to the script of the drama which brings out each character in full detail. Every role is to be played with a display of emotional moods, gestures and manner of speaking so as to convince the audience that the actor has complete identity with the role.

In the green room each actor is given his or her appropriate costume. Either masks are used for a clear display of moods or the face and body are painted in an impressive manner. The beauty of an actor or actress is not to be judged with the norms used in a beauty contest. Instead, it is



51. ऐ

judged in accordance with the ability of the character to mirror the correct impression in the imagination of the onlooker. The spectator should be able to discern the villain from the noble hero. The director gives detailed instructions to each actor or actress.

In the present situation, O Mother, you are the manager, you are the director and you are the playwright. The success of the play lies in your ability to direct each actor to play his part perfectly. The choreography of a play lies half in the instruction given in the green room and half on the stage in the setting of each scene, the environmental controls that are given and the duration of time assigned to bring out each scene's full effect. This can be seen in great evidence in actual life situations, such as when you bring forth a million progeny from certain bacteria in less than a minute's time while you patiently wait for an elephant to bring forth its rare progeny once in a blue moon. After finalizing your choreography you bring into limelight your fully instructed actors and actresses to carry out their performances in a sequential order.

The total effect you expect from the display is complete entertainment for your spectators. For that, you have a normative criterion by which the audience can have a highly subjective participation in the objective performance of the ongoing drama. Each role is to be played by a single person as an actor or actress. Every member of the audience immediately gets into identification with the role and a subjective reciprocation takes place by which the onlooker goes through the performance of the role with a full emotional sharing.

This sharing has three modes. The first is an appraisal of the situation in the light of pure reason. Even the most muddled thinking of a character has to be based on a systematic distortion of the reasoning the character should have. The second mode is almost like some forms of modern art in which the artist systematically distorts and redistributes the parts of the subject very artfully in a painting. The hero who is meant to be noble and ideal is shown as conforming to the highest demand of rightful thinking and noblest of ethical standards. His villainous rival shows a contradictory value vision by which the opposite approach is made feasible with an antithetical value assertion. Other characters show the third mode in which higher and more beautiful reasoning is lost to the vision of an idiotic person. In ancient days such roles were assigned to jesters.

Another area which operates with three modes is that of overt action. The first mode includes restraint of emotion, expediency in action and dexterity in performance, such as in demonstrating skills in self-defense techniques. Then the actions of a kind person can be distinguished from the actions of a cruel person and both can be contrasted with the clumsy behavior of an inferior person. The three modes also operate in the dynamics of the play, the apportioning of energy and will to each character to flow steadily from the beginning to the end with a commitment and a persistence that tries to win the admiration of the audience.

O Mother, the modes reflect the triple modalities of your nature: the pure-clear transparency of *sattva*, the distorted agitation that comes from *rajas* and the inertial confusion which is spilled into the character by *tamas*. Dissonance, when it is strategically displayed by master musicians like Debussy, only adds to the charm of music. Even so, the proportionate balancing of the three *guṇas* only enhances the beauty of your play. Artists have a full mastery over their colors knowing where to paint a stroke that is cold or hot, pure or impure, according to the mood they want to evoke in the connoisseur. Your choice of themes in the drama of life is also like that. You know after all it is only a drama. That is why poets praise you as the manager of the pretentious drama or false drama art.

According to the three modalities of nature you create different moods in your characters. When you bestow the grace of *sattva* it elicits the sense of wonder (*adbhuta*), compassion (*karuṇa*), and peace (*śāntiḥ*). In erotics (*śṛṅgāra*), heroics (*raudra*) and valor (*vīra*), your choice of *guṇa* is *rajas*. In the mood of revulsion or sarcasm (*bībhatsa*), fear (*bhaya*) and humor or clumsiness (*hāsyā*) your preference is for *tamas*. Thus behind all the nine moods it is your coordinating tactics which are giving guidance to the actor or actress.

O Mother, actually the entire drama is your dream. Otherwise, who will expect you, the most compassionate of all mothers, to show a veiled pretension of jealousy, anger and rivalry, not to say fear and clumsiness? If only we could learn the lesson that life is a humorous display of drama that we are asked to play! Then we would be able to keep our balance and not land in prisons or asylums. The appropriate name for your, Mother, is *līlā*. All victory to you.

॥ aīm ॥

Verse Fifty-two

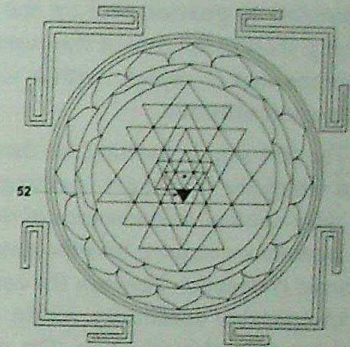
hrīm

O Mother, the giver of ultimate deliverance! Birth and death mark the two extreme points of the drama of life. The opening scene commences with the rising of the curtain when the child is presented to the world as the most glorious event of manifestation. What initial preparations were made by your creative genius to bring a fully formed person with countless potentials into a world of time and space, cognitive perception, value judgment and the resolution to act? It is the greatest of all secrets which the most intelligent of beings have been trying to unravel for thousands of years.

The closing scene of life is so silent and gentle. There the person is laid on the ground with energy depleted, all incentive for action gone and all that is expected is the giving up of the final breath. The last wisp of air is a mysterious bolt with which all the limbs of the living organism have been held in position and riveted to a lifelong program.

Considering the magnitude and complexity of this greatest of all dramas ever staged in the phenomenal context, one is awed by the seriousness of both its phenomenal purposiveness and noumenal defeat, which are bracketed as two sides of the same drama of life and deliverance. There is no subject equal in dignity or more difficult to comprehend than the building up of such a magnificent structure on a well-laid foundation that culminates in a crowning achievement which is ultimately meant to be abandoned, disorganized and cast into an all devouring flame of cremation. Both in its creation and demolition you are present, first as an accomplisher and then as a sympathetic witness.

When a child is within the green room of preparation, before being presented on the stage to act its role, it apparently has no motivation. However, motivation is instantly developed in a fully formed organism thrust out of the environment of a mother's womb into a physiological, psychological, and sociological environment within the confines of the biosphere of Mother Earth. The first response is the primal cry which symbolizes the terror which the individual experiences on its first entry into this world. The child announces itself to be heard by the parents and all dear relatives. There is a proximity of listening ears and seeing eyes.



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Nowhere are the subject and object more emphatically underlined as on the occasion of the primal cry of the child and the immediate attention given to it. The cry is a demand directed towards all who hold themselves responsible to provide care for the child. The call for help comes as a piercing shaft to the ears of the parents which are set within the frame of reference that is replete with a sense of duty and a fully saturated sentimental affection.

The first step in meeting the demand is to turn the eyes to the source from which the primal cry is arising like a volcanic eruption. Not only is the child spotted as the source of demand but the very sight initiates in the parents an inquiry into the nature of the child's problem. Here the intrinsic connection between the ear and eye is poignantly expressed as an inseparable continuity. Child and parent are of equal dialectical importance in this situation. The primal cry and the first nourishment given to the child in response to its demand mark the fulfillment of a duty on the part of the mother and bring to the child a conviction that benevolence is available in the world in which it has been brought to live for a hundred years.

To begin with, the interplay of the ear and eye, name and form, marks two vital links in the theme of life. The recognition of the relationship between the numerator and denominator factors of the value situation is immediately followed by direct action. Lifting the crying child in the parental hands and plugging into its mouth the nipple of the mother's breast symbolically chokes the mouth of demand. The same mouth is used both for the primal cry and for the intake of nourishment. One cannot both cry and eat food. An alternation is implied. Hunger is suffering and the intake of food is enjoyment. These are put in juxtaposition. It is with such a paradox life commences. Ultimately, when a person is dying, all entrances to the system are blocked from within. No food is required; edible goods cannot be taken. Finally the life breath is also rejected. The organism makes no demand. The respondents accept their deliverance from duties by cremating the corpse.

In between the primal cry and final silence various other hungers and thirsts are experienced by the growing individual at several stages of maturation. Although the first act after the child's birth is the severing of the child from the mother by cutting the umbilical cord, a far stronger

bond is established between the mother and child. However soft and delicate the nipple of the mother's breast is, the child's acceptance of it to suck and the mother's admission of her duty to suckle create a forceful bond of unity which is maintained even when the mother and child are physically separate. A similar kind of hard and fast relationship is established between the concept-forming faculty of the child and the perceived objects presented to the child's interest. Thus a child delivered from the confinement of the mother's womb consciously and unconsciously holds on to this world with a million hands of relationship.

This is not only for one lifetime. Even in the tiniest child a futuristic program is hiding. If it is a male, it has the potential to impregnate a future woman, and if it is a female, she can bring forth fully formed individuals to continue the drama of life. The most vital and dynamic instinct is to procreate. Hence, the incentive for that comes through the relationship of the eye and the ear. The relationship between the eye and the ear is very much of the psyche and *soma*. What is heard with the ear is the subtle word which evokes a configuration of meaning in the very deep layers of the listener's consciousness. This incoming stimulus is reversed by the subject through an act of looking and making a correct appraisal of the object from which the stimulation arises. This kind of reciprocal sending and receiving of demands and supplies goes on all through life. It is characterized by an intense form of love which prompts an affective relationship between a person and the world and an equally strong aversion and fear of the source of demand and attachment. There is an intense feeling of wanting to be delivered of such ties. Thus the zest for life and the determination to quit it are always counter-balancing and cancelling each other out.

It is in this context that sex is to be seen as the most dynamic prompting and stimulating principle that makes a very simple glance through the corner of a lover's eye strategically more powerful than the marching in of a terrifying militant force. It is counter-balanced by a peace that surpasses understanding which comes from a transcendence of all value relationships. This is the neutral zero in which we presently see you, O Mother, equating yourself with your Lord, who supremely transcends all the relativistic demands of life. May peace prevail.

॥ ह्रीं ॥

Verse Fifty-three

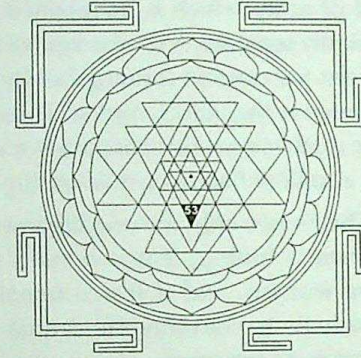
saum̐

O Mother of fulfillment, you have the discrimination to bind and you have the sovereignty to release. We have come to this day, either to terminate the sportive game of life, if that is your wish, or to go into another cycle of phenomenal transformation, if that is decreed by the nature of our attainment. You have a tribasic law for bondage and cyclic phenomenal transformation. You also have another norm for re-establishing the Self on the throne of its supreme sovereignty and absolute freedom.

Many are the triads which you have brought into the constellation of phenomenal creation. First you choose the circumlimitation of the numinous factor by mirroring it, which retains the semblance of the self-founded luminosity of pure-consciousness. This is recognized in Vedānta as an obversion of *pratyāṅga caitanya* into *ābhāsa caitanya*. *Pratyāṅga caitanya* stands for the uncontaminated original while *ābhāsa caitanya* represents its phenomenal conversion. The triad implied here is *cit*, *caitanya* and *cetana* (the pure, the potential to manifest, and the manifested). Consequently there arises a ground that is veiled by phenomenality (*māyā*) and the superimposition of an unreal impression. The ground is the eternal which is not ever affected by either its being veiled (*āvaraṇa*) or superimpositions made on it (*vikṣepa*).

The real ground is none other than pure consciousness. Because of its circumlimitation it comes to have the new status of the cognizing ego (*jñātā*). When subjectivity arises in it, objectivization (*jñeya*) automatically happens. As the prevailing consciousness exists with an oscillatory dynamic, knowledge is at one moment with the ego-self (subject) and the next moment with the object (*viśaya*). The oscillatory phenomenon is recognized as knowledge (*jñāna*). Once the tri-basic schism is introduced into individuation, the whole psychological content of the individual is fated to live as a person with the Self (*ātman*) as the ground, the *antaḥkāraṇa* or inner organ as the instrument of mentation and the senses as the bodily conditions to color the registry of every impression as an experience.

Every experience has a wakeful impact followed by a processing of it (*saṁskāra*) to be stored in memory (*citta*) for subsequent recall (*anusmaraṇa*). In the perceptual cognition (*jñāna*), willful action (*karma*) and affective



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evaluation (*icchā*), triple qualities of your procreative nature, enter as pure-clear (*sattva*), affective exaggeration (*rajas*), and inertial retention (*tamas*). You bring another kind of triad into the cognitive world of the assessment of truth — revelation of absolute truth (*paramārtha*), a comprehension of empirical reality (*yathārtha*), and an illusory perception of the unreal (*pratibhāsa*).

After these initial preparations the great game of cyclic birth and death is given with an interlude to attempt perfection which can qualify the person to be released. You are always watchful of this game with the eye of perfection, with the relativistic eye of approximation, and with the eye of assessment which decides how much of the incipient memory is left to be cleared away. Corresponding to the triple aspects of the spirit, *sat*, *cit* and *ānanda*, you retain their negative conditional shadows *sattva*, *rajas* and *tamas*. If we come to see the pure ground on which the drama has been enacted umpteen times and if we make a breakthrough, the bonds of ignorance in our hearts will automatically be cut asunder and we will wake into the pure state of fearlessness (*abhaya*). Then the game is over.

If any shade of doubt, fear or incipient memory is left, you are sure to notice it and begin the game all over again. This sport of yours is beginningless. Its substance is ignorance. Its modes are of multicolored variegations. Its coexisting devices are the principle of veiling (*āvaraṇa*) and the principle of superimposition or projection (*vikṣepa*). In your benevolence you have decided the game should have appropriate termination. Such being your indelible law, we have only one course left to us. That is resigning everything to your unfailing wisdom.

O compassionate one, Karuṇāmayī, accept this final dedication and total admission of your sovereignty (*śaraṇa*). All the intrinsic values which have constituted this person in his or her individuation are given up here and now (*sarvadharmāṇa parityajya*). We take refuge in you.

॥ saum ॥

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पुस्तकालय

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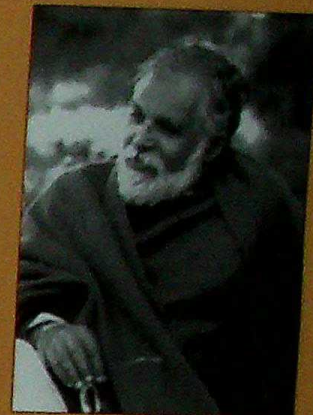


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Guru Nitya Chaitanya Yati (1923-1999) was born into a family of scholars and poets in Kerala State, South India. He was in the spiritual hierarchy of the mystic Narayana Guru and was a direct disciple of Nataraja Guru, who founded the Narayana Gurukula, a worldwide contemplative fraternity, and the East West Universe of Brahmaavidyā. In his youth Guru Nitya spent several years as a wandering mendicant, studying with traditional teachers from a variety of spiritual traditions. As a scholar of philosophy and psychology, Guru Nitya had been a professor at colleges throughout India; in addition he had travelled and taught in Europe, Australia and America. While specializing in India's inheritance of wisdom, he was fully versed in modern academic thinking as well, with special emphasis on the field of psychology. His contemplative absorption gave him the grace of mystical envisioning.

